

Essential guide to Lazio



REGIONE LAZIO

Lazio in a few words



Figure 1 - Lazio

Lazio is famous because it's the Italian region that has Rome. And this certainly makes it an important region at tourist level... but this is not all, in fact it's only a part. Actually Lazio is a region full of culture, history, nature, that gives the tourist what he wants, allowing him to live different experiences and to turn his own vacation in an unforgettable event.

Morphology

Three very definite mountain ranges of volcanic origin exist here: the Volsini, the Cimini and the Sabatini Mountains, whose principal craters contain respectively, the lakes of Bolsena, Vico and Bracciano. These rises go down northeast towards the Tiber's downstream and southwest till the coastal strip called Latial Maremma, cut off near Civitavecchia by the mountains of Tolfa, of volcanic origin, too.

The Latial Maremma meets the Roman Countryside, crossed by the Tiber. It's limited by the Alban Hills and the Prenestini Mountains, to which follow the calcareous rises of the Simbruini and the Ernici Mountains, of the Meta and Mainarde, that are part of the Abruzzi Apennines, and the rises, also calcareous, of the Lepini, the Ausoni and the Aurunci Mountains parted by the Apennines and by the wide downstream of the river Sacco (Ciociaria) and Liri. At the mountain's foot there are the Pontine Marshes, once a swampy area and now reclaimed, the Plain of Fondi and the coastal plain between Gaeta and the low course of the river Garigliano. If we go up the Tiber's downstream we come to the Sabine region. Between the Sabine Mountains and the Reatini ones opens out the wide plain of Rieti, to which follow the ones of Leonessa and of Amatrice in the inland and towards southeast the river Sacco's downstream.

The coasts are mainly low and flat and have some headlands, formed by isolated rises that were islands once, or by the end of ridges or by the outlet of the Tiber itself.

The Pontine Islands are part of Lazio.

Rivers and lakes

Its longest river, the Tiber, comes from Umbria. Several river streams flow in the Tiber: the Velino, the Salto and the Turano, through the Nera and the Aniene. Other minor rivers are the Sacco and the Liri but also the Fiora, the Marta and the Arrone



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that reach the ocean directly after a relatively short course. Other important lakes, besides the already mentioned lakes of Bolsena, Vico and Bracciano, are the ones of Albano and of Nemi, that are also contained by the craters of two extinct volcanoes in the Alban Hills.



Figure 2 – Blue Lake (Frosinone)

The population

The population's density in Lazio is at the third place in Italy, after Campania and Lombardy. Actually more than 50% of the population lives in the capital city, Rome, bringing in this way to a much lower effective density in the rest of the region. This makes so that there are a series of inhabited areas with very small populations.

Economy

The region's economy has been unchanged in the last decades, if we don't include the area of Rome. Agriculture, crafts and sheep, cattle and pig breeding, abreast by fishing in the principal ports (Civitavecchia, Anzio, Terracina, Gaeta and Ponza) are the traditional sources of income.

The agriculture produces wheat, wine grapes, fruit and vegetables produces and olives. This gives us the chance to taste some unique wines with dishes full of very fine ingredients, seasoned with an olive oil that is among the best ones of the Mediterranean basin that, for its organoleptic characteristics, extols its fragrances and scents.

Lazio, with a particular care to Rome, is equipped with numerous and efficient accommodation facilities and it offers numerous and very important reasons with historic-artistic interest, that can take up a good part of the national and international tourist activity. The tourist offer also includes the more traditional bathing one and completes itself with the one of other inner localities less known but often important for history, artistic monuments and enogastronomic offers. Among these small Latial towns the most famous for their monumental characteristics are Anagni, Alatri, Cassino and to the north, Tuscania, Bolsena, Montefiascone or, in the inland,



Amatrice. Tarquinia, on the northern coast, is one of the largest archaeological centers connected to Italy's Etruscan civilization.



Figure 1 – Montecassino Abbey

The weather

The climate is mild everywhere, but the difference of temperature and humidity between the coasts, subject to the sea's influence, and the inner areas, are much more sensible.

In the inner zones, particularly where significant rises are present, the temperature range is wide and the precipitations are more plentiful, in winter they often take snowy characteristics, giving interesting chances to those who love winter sports.

History

Latium originally inhabited by the Latins, thanks to the Roman conquests, incorporated the lands of the Ernici, the Equi, the Aurunci and the Volsci, so that it extended its boundaries to the Sanniti, the Marsi and Campania, territory this one that took the name of Latium Novi to be differed from Latium veteres, that indicated Lazio in its original extension.



Figure 2 – Etrurian Picture

In Augustus' administrative system Lazio was, with the present Campania, the first region, being in fact an extension of Rome.

This region regained its freedom after the Gothic war (535-553) and the Byzantine conquest, since the "Roman Duchy" became property of the Emperor of the East. But



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soon, weakened by the long wars fought against the Longobards, the territory was conquered by Rome's bishop, who already had wide possessions in the region. The strengthening of the non-religious and ecclesiastical aristocracy brought the many lords and the bishop of Rome to compete continuously for portions of the latial territory, in the continuous struggles for power, till the middle of the XVI century.

Innocent III tried to strengthen his own territorial power, trying to assert his authority on the provincial administrations of Tuscia, Campagna and Marittima through the Church's executives, in order to demolish the Colonna's power. Other popes have repeated the same thing.

The Avignon period (1309-1376) with the pope's absence from Rome encouraged the feudal lords' power, to whom were opposed the small communes and especially Rome, that with Cola di Rienzo tried to set out as opponents of the ecclesiastic power. But between 1353 and 1367 the pontifical authority's restoration brought to a total retrieval of Lazio and the rest of the Pontifical States.

The pontifical power's definitive victory, starting from the middle of the XVI century joined Lazio's history with the Pontifical States one, in which it formed the provincial administrations of St. Peter's estate, with a governor at Viterbo and of Marittima and Campagna, with a governor at Frosinone.

After the short interval of the Roman Republic and the region's annexation to France, by Napoleon I, Lazio was newly part of the Pontifical States.

Lazio was definitely enclosed to the Kingdom of Italy in 1870 when, after the French troops abandoned Rome, General Cadorna entered in the pontifical territory, occupying Rome on the 20 of September

The Cities

In a short tourist guide we can only describe the main cities, including in their "virtual visit" a small mention to the nearby localities that are worth to be visited more in depth. Surely, we won't be exhaustive and the exclusion of a town or a village doesn't mean that it doesn't have any source of interest, but it will rather be an absence of space. Just think that Lazio's communes are more than 350. For a more detailed description we send back to the site's section dedicated to Lazio's communes.

ROMA

Capital of the region of Lazio, of the homonymous provincial administration, capital city of the Italian Republic and bishop's see of the Pope.

The city was born, according to the legend, the 21 of April 753 B.C. on the Palatine Hill (one of the seven hills) from which we had the following and gradual development, going through the republican period (509-31 B.C.), when Rome established itself as one of the Mediterranean's main and populated cities. In those



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centuries the city gained that grandness and that magnificence still visible nowadays. The most important works: the Tabularium of the Campidoglio, the Theatre of Marcellus, the Imperial Forums whose building was started by the emperor Augustus, the grand imperial Palace on the Palatine wanted by Nero, the Colosseum and the Arch of Titus.



Figure 3 - Fori imperiali

In the II and III century Rome reached its grandness' peak. In that period were built the Forums by Trajan, Caracalla's Baths and the Aurelian Walls, the Baths of Diocletian, the Arch of Constantine and the Basilica of Maxentius.

The imperial court's transfer to Byzantium marked the beginning of its decline.

The city, after the barbarian invasions, saw the birth of many churches that because of the prohibition of being built instead of the temples, determined the movement of the city's center from the Forums and the Palatine to the Lateran, Episcopal seat at Rome.

After the city's sack by the Saracens in 846, Pope Leo IV made build Castel Sant'Angelo, being the birthplace of the so-called "Leonine city" and making himself the name of Rome's real lord.



Figure 4 - Castel S. Angelo

The following centuries saw the papal power's constant growth till the first jubilee's celebration (1300), with the city launched to a new rebirth, also with Giotto and other artists' contribution.

The following events, as the Avignon papacy, the plague of 1341, the earthquake of 1349 and the failure of Cola di Rienzo's policy, brought Rome back to a state of extreme poverty and decay.

The Pope's return from Avignon interrupted this period.



In the Renaissance, the many popes that alternated on the pontifical seat, having recourse of the period's artists, made the city go back to its ancient glories. The building of Ponte Sisto, of the Basilica of St Peter's and of Via Giulia, the frescos of the Sistine Chapel's vault are only some of the works that were started in those years.

Still in those years is dated back Michelangelo's transformation of the Piazza del Campidoglio, with the statue of Marcus Aurelius. Some very important works were made in the following years but only with Pope Sixtus V (1585-90) the city went through the definite transformation that brought it to have the appearance that we can still admire nowadays.

Alexander II included the Baroque style thanks to Bernini's work that made St. Peter's colonnade and Piazza Navona's fountains. Between the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, the stairway of Trinità dei Monti and the Trevi Fountain were made.



Figure 5 - St. Peter's Place

At the end of the century the city underwent the annexation to France, that in its plans saw Rome as a city second only to Paris in the Napoleonic Empire, a vision this one that found only a partial fulfillment with the building of the Pincio and the urban arrangement of Piazza del Popolo and of Trajan's Column.

In 1815 with Pius VII the city lived again an obscurantist period and withdrew in itself for all the century.

Rome, after the Risorgimento, became capital city of the Kingdom of Italy and started an important period of population increase and urban development.

The inhabitants passed from the 200000 of 1870 to the 1500000 of the end of World War II and a few roads still of vital importance for the city like via Nazionale, via Cavour and corso Vittorio Emanuele III were made.

The quarters of Esquilino, Testaccio, Prati, Flaminio, Salario, Monteverde, Celio, Cinecittà, the university district and, in the last post-war period, Eur have developed a lot.





Figure 6 - EUR

Today the city is political capital of the Republic of Italy and also worldwide center of Christendom, thanks to the presence of the Sovereign Pontiff, who lives in Vatican City.

To visit Rome, we can start from the city's geometrical center that is Piazza Venezia.

The square has origin in the fifteenth century and we can find on it some work of art of great importance like Palazzo Venezia, the first example of Renaissance civil building, started in 1455 on Leon Battista Alberti's model. In the centuries Palazzo Venezia has been used for different purposes until becoming, in the Fascism's twenty years, the meeting place of the Great Council. The palace also contains the Basilica of St. Mark's. Inside the Museum of Palazzo Venezia we can admire important painting works, valuable ivories and jewellerys all kept in the Altoviti Hall.



Figure 7 - Vittoriano

The Complesso del Vittoriano, dedicated to the memory of Italy's first king, was started in 1885 by Giuseppe Sacconi and finished in 1911, to which was added in 1925 the Altar della Patria, on which dominates the Statue of the Goddess Rome and we can admire two bas-relievs and the tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The Campidoglio, placed behind the Vittoriano, was the religious centre and the necropolis of the ancient city, being in the centuries the heart and the seat of the town government. It's formed by Piazza del Campidoglio that owes to Michelangelo the project of the architectural layout and the paving. Three palaces, Senatorio, dei Conservatori and palazzo Nuovo, give onto it and we can find the pedestal that accommodates the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius (from 1981 the original one is in the Capitoline Museums.) Palazzo Senatorio is the seat of Rome's City Hall and was built altering a previous project of Michelangelo. Above the front rises the bell tower of Martino Longhi il Vecchio (1582). In the council's room is kept a statue of Julius Caesar dated back to the I century B.C. Palazzo dei Conservatori was built at



the beginning of 1563 by Michelangelo, to whom succeeded Giacomo della Porta. Still by Michelangelo is the planning of Palazzo Nuovo. The palaces contain the Capitoline Museum that was born in 1471 when Sixtus IV donated the bronzes kept in the Lateran to the city of Rome. To these were added in 1773 the Albani collection and other works of art. Inside we can also find the apartment dei Conservatori, that contains some very important works like the statues of Urban VIII, by Bernini, the ones of Innocent X, the Spinario, the portrait of Brutus and the famous Romolus and Remus wolf, symbol of the city, to which were added the twins in the fifteenth century. In the Museum of Palazzo dei Conservatori we can admire other works like the Esquiline Venus, Commodus' bust and the crater of Aristonothos.



Figure 8 - Campidoglio

Inside the Capitoline Picture Gallery we can find paintings of school among which: the Holy Family by Dossi, the Magdalena by Tintoretto, the Baptism of Jesus by Tiziano, some works of the seventeenth century European painting, of the Umbrian, Tuscan and Aemilian one of the fourteenth and fifteenth century and the seventeenth century's Italian painting.

The Capitoline Museum, in Palazzo Nuovo, contains in the courtyard the original of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, one of the most rare examples in bronze preserved from the ancient times that after a long restoration (1981-90) has been replaced in Piazza del Campidoglio by a copy. The legend says that when the statue's gold plating will the little owl (the tuft between the horse's ears) will announce the end of the world. Inside the museum: the section of the creeds and the eastern monuments in Rome, the Capitoline Venus, the Galata Morente, Cupid and Psyche and a resting satyr. We also have the chance to admire a mosaic of four doves that drink from a vase, work that comes from Hadrain's Villa.

Behind Palazzo Nuovo there is the church of St. Mary in Aracoeli that takes the name from the legend according to which the Virgin had appeared here to Augustus. From 1250 the church has been entrusted to the Franciscans and inside, it contains important works of Roman art, among which: the engraved ceiling, the tombstone of Giovanni Crivelli, made by Donatello, the series of frescos made by Pinturicchio (among which St. Bernard), St. Anthony from Padua, only remain of the frescos of Benozzo Bozzoli.

From Piazza Venezia we can walk along Via dei Fori imperiali, one of Rome's most charming roads that divides the Imperial Forums, placed on the left, from the Roman Forum. Along the road, we can see the Basilica of Sts. Cosma and Damiano and the church of St. Francesca Romano and, at the end, we will see one of the city's most



famous monuments, the city's symbol in the world: the Colosseum. Its real name is Flavian Amphitheatre because the Flavians were the ones that built it, and in the ancient times, it was center of performances with fights between wild beasts and gladiators. Its building was started by Vespasian but it was Titus that inaugurated it in 80, with the famous games that lasted 100 days. The Colosseum was heavily damaged by the earthquake and by the raids that went on for centuries.



Figure 9 - Arch of Constantine

Nearby we can find the Arch of Constantine, built in 315 to celebrate the emperor's victory on Maxentius. In the park of the Oppio Hill there is the Domus Aurea, famous villa that Nero had made build after the fire at Rome in 64.

Trajan's Forum is the widest of the Imperial Forums and was planned by Apollodoro di Damasco in 107. Inside we can still see the Ulpian Basilica and Trajan's Column, dedicated to the emperor after the victory on the Dacian, on which are represented battle scenes of that war. Inside the Roman Forum, Rome's vital center for centuries, we can find: the Aemilian Basilica, the Curia, the tomb of Romulus, the Julian Basilica, the temple of Saturn, the Arch of Septimus Severus, the Forum's Square, the House of Livia, the temple of the Castores, of Caesar, of Vesta, of Antonine and Faustine, the Basilica of Maxentius, the Flavian's Palace, the Arch of Titus, the Domus Augustana and the Stadium.

The visit just described is far from giving a detailed account of all the places at Rome. It's only a start that allows you to see some of its most famous places, with a long walk.

VITERBO

This episcopal see stands at the foot of *Cimini* mountains, along the *via Cassia*. The ancient roman *Tuscia* still shows cremellated and turrated walls provided with seven gates .

Its history often waves together with the one of the Popes who lived, were elected and died in the town.

The name Viterbo derives almost for sure from “*vetus urbs*”, meaning old town. Its history begins as a small etruscan village, as a matter of fact the province of Viterbo still offers such a unique wealth of etruscan finds.



The 13th century represented the most glorious period of the city since, after several wars, it was instituted episcopal see with Pope Alessandro IV in 1257. Henceforth, a strong bond characterized the history of the city and the popes' history until the uprising against the election of Martino IV. Right after the excommunication of the town, the neighbouring signories had been fighting over its rule for a couple of centuries until the Church peacemaking gesture. The town has perfectly kept its typical thirteenth-century look.

Piazza del Plebiscito is the city centre where the three palaces of Podestà, Prefecture and Priors are located. The latter one was raised in 15th century by Sisto IV. *Piazza S.Lorenzo* is overshadowed by the Cathedral built in 12th century containing also the sarcophagus of Giovanni XXI, a baptismal basin realized by Francesco d'Ancona, and the *Madonna della Carbonara*. The church of *S.Maria Nuova* is one of the oldest in town. It gives visitors the chance to contemplate both the pulpit from which *San Tommaso d'Aquino* preached and a collection of the main local painters' works from 14th to 16th century, besides the longobard garth.



Figure 10 – Pope' Palace

The Popes' palace, raised between 1255 and 1267, is definitely the most renowned monument of the city being the utmost example of local gothic architecture. The breathtaking scenery which can be admired from the balcony includes also the 15th century fountain.

Visitors should spend a few minutes walking along *via S.Pellegrino* through the medieval side of the town surrounded by towers. Passing through the whole district where the homes of the families *Gatti*, *Poscia* and of *S.Rosa* (patron saint of the city), the churches of *S.Sisto* and *S.Maria della Verità* stand up close to the *Museo Civico* (containing some mummy-cases from hellenistic and roman necropolis) and the Museum of national Archaeology visitors get to *Alessandri's* palace. It was the 13th century residence of the aristocratic family.

Although this might seem a fascinating itinerary turning the clocks back, it does not exhaust all the artistic wonders the province of Viterbo may offer to its visitors.



RIETI

The province of Rieti is the less crowded and thickly populated of the Region.



Figure 11 - Rieti

Its territory is mainly mountainous and offers a unique attraction in its way. It's characterized by an inaccessible land and small towns in the midst of nature.

In ancient times the capital of the Sabines was called "Reate". In 290 B.C. it was annexed to the Roman countryside by *Curio Dentato* and it was instituted the headquarter of the prefectural offices until the Augustan era. During the Middle Ages it was joined to the duchy of Spoleto until 12th century when it became a guelf-side municipal corporation. The town has been laid waste many times but in 13th century it was finally surrounded by long walls which marked the area off for several centuries. After falling under the Angevin rule it came back to the Church in 1354. Later on it was embellished and widened by order of an episcopal vicar, and it henceforth tracked the events of the Papal States until its annexation to the Savoy State in 1860.

A tour of Rieti may start from *Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II*, which can be considered the heart of the city open onto the roman Forum area and it is situated close to the 8th century Town Hall. The latter building contains *the Museo Civico*, divided into two sections: archaeology and painting. A ceramic and bronze-made saddlebacked urn belonging to the first half of 9th century, fine boccas from the end of 7th century, a miniature urn from the hellenistic era, roman statues and portraits and many other findings of the utmost interest are located in this section of the museum. The section dedicated to painting contains several religious paintings portraying churches. Some sculptural works are exhibited as well: among them it's worth mentioning the *Madonna con Bambino* belonging to the very beginning of 14th century.

The church of *S. Agostino* displays a beautiful 13th century façade, endowed with a 14th century portal and blank double lancet windows both along its sides and in its polygonal apses. The baroque plant of the church is due to a reconstruction intervention during 18th century, the only works preserved by the modern renovations as a matter of fact are the ones on the internal walls.

The Duomo dates back to 12th and 13th century. The romanesque bell tower, the porch and the central portal belong, in fact, to the above-mentioned period. The interior dates back to 17th century, with its chapel on the right of the apses displaying



a *Madonna del Popolo* which belongs to 16th century and the chapel on the other side holding a fresco by Antoniazio Romano called “*la Madonna e i Santi*”.



Figure 12 - Duomo

It is also worth visiting the *Museo Diocesano* which is situated in the 14th century Baptistery annexed to the Duomo. Its interior holds several works coming from the Duomo and other churches all over the region, such as the wooden *Madonne di S.Maria di Sambuco e di Collemaggiore*, a 15th century baptismal font, frescos whose origins range from 13th and 15th century, and some 15th century vestments.

The episcopal Palace, whose balcony opens onto the square, expresses in its 13th century shape the building's origin. On the groundfloor the *volte del Vescovado*, a beautiful two-naves colonnade, stands out. The *arco del Vescovo* was built, during 13th century, at the times of Bonifacio VIII.

The medieval walls, with their square semicylindrical towers, date back to 13th century and can still be admired, being in the overall well preserved.

The most renowned tourist resort in the province of Rieti is the *Terminillo*, also known as the romans' mountain because of its location; it is, as a matter of fact, the closest skiing resort to Rome.



Figure 13 - Terminillo

One of the main attractions of this province is the gastronomy, resulting from the combination of the traditions of Umbria and Latium. Among the specialities it's worth



mentioning: the *spaghetti alla amatriciana*, typical dish of the small town Amatrice, the *jaccoli*, rough spaghetti served dry with a gravy and pecorino cheese topping, the *stracci di Antrodoco*, pancakes filled with spicy meat and served with cheese and gravy, the *maccheroni a fezze*, the *abbacchio in guazzetto*, the *pollo spezzettato alla sabinese*, sautéed and served with an anchovy, caper and olive sauce dressing. The sweet specialities are: the *pizza pasqualina*, the *maccheroni alle noci* and the *tozzetti di miele e noci spezzettate*.



Figure 14 - Amatriciana

The region has an infinity of specialities, and every single dish is prepared with local ingredients. A top quality olive oil, anyway, is what distinguishes the territory of Rieti. This dainty tasted product is able to enhance even the flavour of plain dishes.

LATINA

It was founded in 1932 on a territory inhabited by a thin neighbourhood while the drainage was under way. The town, which is situated in the heart of the Roman country, was built according to the fascist architecture, as a matter of fact it kept that name until the fall of the dictatorial regime. Thanks to the fast growth which followed World War II, the city can be considered the second province in its region. As to monuments, it's not really worth visiting Latina since it is far too recent. On the other hand its province offers both attractive shores with lots of seaside resorts and an inland countryside full of places to be visited. Among them the *Castello di Ninfa* with its nature reserve stands out.



Figure 15 - Ninfa



The province of Latina, due to its short history, does not have any gastronomic tradition. Nevertheless, it borrowed some tradition from the neighbouring region of Campania. The area between Formia and Gaeta, in fact, is renowned for its production of *mozzarella di bufala*, *provola affumicata*, *caciocavallo* and *provolone*, all dairy products originally ascribed to the region of Campania. The recipes themselves, indeed, show the effects of the influence, for this reason there is a wide range of seafood dishes. The *olive di Gaeta* are a typical product of the region, these medium sized olives have a distinctive flavour that makes them the top ingredient for several recipes.

FROSINONE

This volscian town carrying the name of *Frusino*, was conquered by M.Furio Camillo in 386 B.C. and then rose up against Rome together with the people called *ernici* in 306 B.C. . Following a period of settlement during the imperial era, the town was ruled by the Byzantines and the Longobards. It was then conquered by Charles the Great in 798 B.C. and thus donated to the Church. The town has later been ruled by the Saracens, the Normans, the Suevians and the Angevins before being laid waste by an earthquake in 1350 and rebuilt in 1527. After further historical events mainly concerning the Lansquenets, the French and the Spanish, it defected to the pontifical rule and was instituted capital of the provinces of Campagna and Marittima.



Figure 16 - Cathedral

From piazzale Vittorio Veneto, which is situated in the upper side of the neighbourhood, visitors have a lovely view of a huge area of the Ciociaria. The old town is overshadowed by the Cathedral, an originally romanian church restored in 18th century and during the after world war II period. Its stylish and picturesque bell tower, characterized by three rows of mullioned windows, still keeps the traces of the original building. Where the old amphitheatre stood just a few ruins remain close to the river *Cossa*, and they're the only evidence of the roman town, risen in the area of the volscian "Frusino".



Frosinone is situated in the heart of the Ciociaria, on the top of a hill. The primitive centre of the neighbourhood, curled up on the hilltop around the cathedral at first, expanded slowly and irregularly being compelled to match the indented morphology of the hill. The scenery from the city includes the valley of *Sacco*, the *Lepini* and *Ernici* mountains, that means almost all the Ciociaria.

The most delicious amongst the infinity of gastronomic specialities are the *timballo alla Bonifacio VIII*, maccheroni with a chicken dressing, gravy, meat balls, mushrooms and truffles, along with the *fettuccine alla ciociara* and mush with dumplings.

The traditional recipes make a wide use of meat: there are pork ribs served with mutton, roast kebabs and grilled sausages. Even the *ciambelle di Sora*, a bagel-like cookie, the *amaretti di Fiuggi*, the *spumette di Campoli Appennino* and the *paste reali di Atina*. There's just one winery in the province of Frosinone, that is the *Cesarese del Piglio*, which offers a choice of sweet, dry and sparkling red wine.

THE EVENTS

Here follow some typical folkloristic events of the Region. The list drawn up below is far from being a thorough schedule, since Latium is a region very rich in events. We refer the reader to the specific section of the website for a more comprehensive schedule.

THE “CARNEVALE DI RONCIGLIONE”

Ronciglione (Viterbo)

February, from Friday to Mardi Gras

The *Carnevale di Ronciglione* holds a pivotal position, not only for the considerable antiquity of the event, but also for the wide range of its ethnographic elements.

The imposing voice of the main bell and the Hussars' parade ring up the curtain on the celebrations, early in the afternoon of the last carnival friday. The *Re dei Carnevalesi*, accompanied by costume knights, settles in town taking from the mayor the delivery of the keys thus assuring five days of revel to everybody.



Figure 17 – Horse riding

Then it's the turn of the *Corsa a vuoto*, once called *la Carriera*. That means the Berbers' ride which was once renowned even in Rome: unsaddled horses are allowed to gallop without jockeys on a pathway of approximately one kilometre through the



streets of the town. On the following days, particularly on Sunday and Mardi Gras, other similar horse rides, dancing in the streets, fancy dresses contests, night long parties, the *Gran Corso di Gala*, an imposing parade of allegorical trucks, take place.

On the evening of Mardi Gras everyone takes part in a terrific saltarello. At the end of this ritual The *Re di Carnevale*, convicted to death, is set on fire.

S. GIUSEPPE

Rome
March 19

Within the Trionfale district the carpenter Saint is celebrated in Rome all day long with a mass consumption of pancakes and fried cream puffs. This tradition is likely to derive from an initiation ceremony for the arrival of spring, which was dedicated by the Romans to Silenus, Bacchus's father.

Following the advent of Christianity, the ritual was switched to Jesus's putative father, thus highlighting its aptitude to last as centuries go by.

THE "INFIORATA"

Genzano (Rome)
Between May and June, on the Corpus Domini Sunday

On the Sunday following the Corpus Domini, *Via Belardi*, the street climbing from the main square up to the church of *S. Maria della Cima*, is totally covered with a varicoloured flowers and leaves blanket, over an area of approximately 2000 square metres. At sunset, on the chime of the bells, the Bishop, carrying the Ostensory, shows up on the church doorway to lead the procession along the floral pathway. People spend the evening in the lit streets of the town, among workshops, games, food and amusements. At the end of the celebration, crews of young people, starting from the upper side where the church stands, walk the pathway down wiping any trace of the ornaments out of the pavement with their foot.



Figure 18 – Floreal carpet

Nowadays, the Infiorata is associated to a series of celebrations lasting all the week long, including ballet shows, art exhibitions and concerts.



THE “MACCHINA DI SANTA ROSA”

Viterbo

September 3 – St. Rosa’s day

September 3 is the day Viterbo celebrates its patron saint.

An infinity of legends tell about the figure of young S. Rosa, died at seventeen, who was probably involved in the most determining events which took place by the middle of 13th century.

Her body was perfectly preserved when it was exhumed seven years after her death which occurred in 1251. The corpse was then transferred through a solemn procession, by order of pope Alessandro IV, from the chapel where it was placed to the church of *S. Damiano* that finally became today’s *Santuario di S. Rosa*, after changing its form and name several times through the centuries.



Figure 19 - Macchina of S.Rosa

The modern celebration acts as a remembrance of the old ceremony. Yet, since the end of 17th century, the canopy with the saint’s image was replaced by a huge monument, whose structure reminds an obelisk rich in symbolic depictions and embellishing lights. The task of carrying the so-called *macchina* became a real strength and stamina as well as an ability competition. Today the *macchina* is more than thirty metres high and its weight is somewhere around four tons. A hundred of porters picked a month earlier from the brotherhood of S. Rosa, carry the *macchina* during the procession.

The brotherhood is a lay fraternity whose only target is keeping the tradition alive. The outcome of the strength and stamina competitions determine the grant of the right place to everybody in the carriage.

At two o’clock p.m. a door to door clothing ceremony takes place, while at five o’clock the porters all together make a devotional tour of the five churches (*S. Maria Nuova, S. Giacinta, S. Angelo, Maria SS. Liberatrice, S. Rosa*) pleading for prop and help.



At eight p.m. the crowd gather in front of the *Santuario di S. Rosa*. Afterwards they move towards *Porta Romana* where they get in the church of *S. Sisto*, the blessing and absolution “in articulo mortis”, in case of death. The undertaking they’re going to begin as a matter of fact is definitely hazardous.

At nine o’clock the curtains that cover the *Macchina* suddenly fall. The porters, fomented by an imperious voice, arrange themselves under the truss, everybody in his granted place. Then the *Macchina* staggers, moves upwards and finally sets off. The path is approximately one kilometre long, and four stops are scheduled: *Piazza Fontana Grande*, *Piazza del Plebiscito*, *chiesa del Suffragio* and *Piazza Verdi*. Before stopping for the second time, the *Macchina* swings around in front of the Priors’ Palace.

What with stops and restarts the porters get to the beginning of a 12% gradient slope that takes to the Santuario. This is the hardest and most hazardous part for the bearers who cover this last part running without stopping till they can place the heavy load on the parvis, while the streetlights are being switched on all over the city and a general loud applause is breaking up.

The routes to drink

To bring properly this short guide to an end, we definitely cannot miss some tips to taste local products pacing through some “routes to drink”.

Once again it is a bunch of skeletal itineraries, useful to tourists visiting Latium for the first time. Further tips and itineraries are available on www.turislazio.it website.

The Wine and Olive oil Route in the region of Tuscia

The first itinerary starts from the heart of the *Tuscia Viterbese*, and *Riserva Naturale del Lago di Vico*, an opencast natural workshop in the region of Tuscia.

The Lake of Vico is a sheet of water where otters, whitefish, perches, eels, pikes and trouts live. It is surrounded by a thick wood called *Selva Cimina*. The several paths unraveling through woods and hazel groves offer tons of large chestnuts and mushrooms.

Once visitors get to the tiny village of Civita “the dying town”, they can have a nibble of the tasty morsels of the genuine local cuisine. This village which can be easily visited in a walk, is renowned for such specialities as the *acquacotta*, a bread-based dish containing also vegetables, stock and eggs, the “*tortorello o vermicello*” pasta with a garlic and rosemary dressing, and the roasted piglet with mushrooms and truffles, to be washed down with a *Vignanello* red wine. The recipe for homemade *tozzetti* and *panpepato*, typical bakery of this region include a wide use of local hazelnuts.

The Tuscia offers several other high quality wines such as the *Vignanello Bianco Superiore* and the *Greco di Vignanello*.

Walking through the streets of the suggested route other local products can be tasted in the meantime or taken back home and tasted afterwards. Among them it is worth mentioning: the honey from *Monte Rufeno*, the red garlic from *Proceno*, the spelt from *Pungolo d’Acquapendente*, the lentil from *Onano*, the green asparagus from



Canino, the bean from *Purgatorio di Gradoli*, “scatolone” tomato from *Bolsena*, whitefish from the lake of *Bolsena*, chickpea from *Solco Dritto*, the potato from *Alto Viterbese*, the olive oils from *Alta Tuscia*.

Dealing with the olive oils separately would be actually proper since, as well as the region of *Sabina*, this region produces a top quality olive oil that is worth dwelling upon.

It is an extra virgin oil whose pressing is carried out a few hours after the olives are picked up, according to the rules of high quality oil producers. This olive oil, as a matter of fact, is rich in antioxidant qualities and a high nutrition value.

The *DOP* production of oil in the *Tuscia* is mainly located along the *Viterbo-Canino-Vetralla* geographical axis. Here a rich emerald green coloured oil is squeezed out from “*Canino*”, “*Leccino*”, “*Morraiole*”, “*Frantoio*” and “*Pendolino*” olives. Its flavour, as well as its flesh, reminds just minced olives with a tickling undertone due to the freshness of the unripe fruit. Its particular fragrance and particular taste make it a toothsome and natural dressing.

The *DOP* oil from the *Tuscia Lacustre* is a fruity, fresh olive smelling oil which can be delicate, medium and rich and shows off a round and spicy taste. Unlike the latter quality, the *DOP* from *Tuscia Teverina* is mainly produced from “*frantoio*” and “*foggiasca*” oils and it’s rather a sweet oil good to dress seafood. The *DOP* oil from *Tuscia Colli Cimini* is definitely not inferior to the above mentioned qualities.

The wine routes in the area of Castelli Romani

The wine route in the area of *Castelli Romani*, planned and accomplished by the Chamber of Commerce in Rome, is characterized by elements of the utmost archaeological interest, giving visitors the chance to visit some aristocratic mansions, among churches, sanctuaries and tours in parkland. The town of *Monte Porzio Catone* is renowned for its popular museum of wine, a collection of tools and instruments belonging to the rural and winery tradition.

There are seven top quality wineries on this route: “*Colli Albani*”, including among the others the towns of *Albano Laziale*, *Ariccia* and *Castel Gandolfo*, “*Colli Lanuvini*” including also the towns of *Genzano di Roma* and *Lanuvio*, “*Frascati*”, including among the others the towns of *Frascati*, *Grottaferrata* and *Monte Porzio Catone*, “*Marino*”, including also the towns of *Marino* and *Ciampino*, “*Montecompatri e Colonna*”, including among the others the towns of *Colonna*, *Montecompatri* and *Rocca Priora*, and “*Velletri Bianco e Rosso*” and “*Zagarolo*”.

The path of the wine route gets through all the following towns: *Albano*, *Ariccia*, *Castel Gandolfo*, *Colonna*, *Frascati*, *Genzano*, *Grottaferrata*, *Lanuvio*, *Marino*, *Montecompatri*, *Monte Porzio Catone*, *Rocca di Papa*, *Rocca Priora* and *Velletri*.

A feasible path would be the one described below, as it allows visitors to call at any planned destination in a single day, enjoying also the archaeological aspects that characterize the route itself.

Leaving Rome through the *Via Appia* main Road until it crosses the road leading to the airport, visitors can admire a flagstone stretch of road belonging to the ancient *Via Appia* with its lookout towers. The main road then proceeds to *Frattocchie* place,



coming to a halt near the neighbourhood of *S. Maria delle Mole*. The ancient stretch has recently been restored, so that the last part up to *Frattocchie* is now visible again. Proceeding along the *Via Appia* visitors get to *Albano Laziale*, a town rich in archaeological finds such as the *Villa di Pompeo* and the facilities that once would act as the main see of the *Castra Albana della Seconda Legione Partica*. Today the only evidence is the Amphitheatre, the huge reservoirs, the thermal baths of the camp which was earlier the nymphaeum of the *villa di Domiziano*.

Leaving the *Via Appia nuova* near the church of *S. Maria della Stella* (*via della stella*) visitors would then proceed on the *Via Appia Antica*. After the first roundabout they get to the remains of one of the gates on *Via Appia*. The main road, whose old structure can still be admired, then climbs up to *Genzano* where the remains of the *Tempio di Diana Cacciatrice* and the *Museo delle navi Romane* stand up on the bank of the lake of Nemi. Visitors might then proceed towards Lanuvio. The ancient *Civita Lavinia* still preserves the remains of the flagstone road bordered by the opus quadratum walls and the sanctuary of *Giunone Sospita*.

CONCLUSION

This skeletal guide aims at illustrating rapidly what Latium can offer to tourists but, first and foremost, it is an invitation addressed to everybody to visit one of the nicest and varied regions in Italy. The information included in the guide is quite tight because of space requirements, therefore it turns on cultural aspects, even if always related to wine and food products of the Region.

Nevertheless, Latium is both a sea region, with a wide offer of shores and seaside resorts for everybody's liking and a mountain region able to satisfy people's need of snow with its skiing resorts of *Terminillo* and *Monte Livata*. Furthermore Latium means nightlife, shows, theatres, performances, sports.....to sum up, whatever your needs may be, we are sure Latium has the right response you would never expect!

For further information please visit www.turislazio.it website.



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