The Calabrian territory, birthplace of the Mediterranean diet and Magna Graecia, is home to excellent food appreciated all over the world, and a source of health

Calabria, the land of wellness and eternal youth

Porcini Mushrooms

Usually, it is the metropolitan verve that feeds on speed, technology and deadlines to be met. That's why people have always dreamt of finding an idyllic place to rebalance, get back in touch with nature and all it offers, and live life to its fullest. The region of Calabria, the gem of the Mediterranean, is nestled between the Ionian and Tyrrhenian seas. It is as close as possible to this concept of paradise. A rich land, still largely uncontaminated and undiscovered, it contains one of the greatest heritages of agro-food excellence and biodiversity on the planet. An extraordinary range of vegetables, fruit and even rare produce, not to mention the over 350 grape varieties that have disappeared elsewhere, flourish in Calabria.

Throughout history, even the fiercest and strongest couldn't conquer or bend Calabria. Large inland areas were completely protected and isolated for centuries, preserving their uniqueness and original qualities. It is no coincidence that Calabria is the cradle of the Mediterranean diet, today recognised by Unesco. The Mediterranean diet overflows with cereals, legumes, fish, extra virgin olive oil, vegetables, fruit, and especially delicious local herbs and spices, such as rosemary, parsley and basil. At the same time, it is low in meat, sugar, butter and animal fats. It is a basket of genuine and indigenous goodness that feeds a healthy lifestyle.

In Calabria in the so-called 'Borghi del Benessere' (wellness villages) people eat well, live better and longer: day after day Calabria holds its title as a land of long life, custodian of an appreciated and envied agri-food treasure, a living and vital testimony of tradition and culture that draws on the past to grow in the future, in a horizon of shared wellbeing. Calabrian products brim with pride. They are also precious allies against diseases. Top of the list is extra virgin olive oil —the essence of Mediterranean culture and tradition, the green gold of Calabria.

The land's lush fruits include the fragrant and famous red onion of Tropea PGI to the sweet Cosenza Figs PDO, the tenacious Sila Potato PGI. Second, on the Calabrian food pyramid, a perfect expression of the Silan mountains where they originate, is the ruddy Belmonte tomato. And then, the iconic and red-hot Calabrian chilli pepper that tantalises even the most demanding palates. And not to be forgotten so many wheat varieties, specialities such as Acconia Strawberries or Porcini Mushrooms, along with aromatic herbs like oregano, with a powerful and particular value. Legumes are great protagonists of a healthy diet, led by Mediterranean varietals: tasty Carìa beans, sweet and mellow, are unique to Calabria.

The cities and surrounding areas of Cosenza and the Mormanno treasure small, pink lentils — very different from the most known varieties and for this reason widely studied and coveted.

Citrus fruit has its own separate chapter. Bright and boisterous, in a palette of exceptional colours that anticipate the ecstatic taste sensation: Wonders such as Bergamot of Reggio Calabria, from which PDO essential oil is extracted, the Lemon of Rocca Imperiale PGI, the Calabrian Clementine PGI, the fragrant, precious and ancient Citron from the Riviera, and juicy oranges.

The region's heavenly backdrop is the sea. To be precise, the two seas of Calabria overflow with a variety of delights and healthy goodness — all to the good fortune of the region and its inhabitants. Swordfish, caught near the coast between Scilla, Bagnara and Palmi, and Tuna, typical from the Vibo Valentia province, particularly the town of Pizzo Calabro.

Stockfish and Baccalà, especially in the areas of Mammola and Cittanova, in the province of Reggio Calabria. Bluefish, the real pillar of the Mediterranean diet — fished abundant throughout the Calabrian sea — small in size, but with incomparable organoleptic qualities, packed with abundant Omega 3 and unsaturated fats, vital for health.
Alongside recommended foods for frequent consumption, including Sibari rice, Calabria also indulges with greater moderation. But the same authentic freshness remains.

A bouquet of cheeses abound, like Caciocavallo Silano PDO and Pecorino Crotonese PDO, together with special delicacies such as Pecorino del Monte Poro, Caciocavallo di Ciminà, Musulupu, with mixed sheep's and goat's milk, and Pecorino del Pollino, produced in the area of the natural park of the same name.

No self-respecting host or hostess serves a banquet without bread and cakes — a triumph of handmade goodness. For the grand finale, Licorice of Calabria PDO, Calabrian Honey, the Torrone di Bagnara PGI (traditional Calabrian nougat), the Pizzo Truffle, ice cream with a soft interior, and other specialities such as Mostaccioli di Soriano Calabro (seasonal cookies of Greek origins made with flour and honey), party sweets such as Pitta 'mpigliata (filled with dried fruit, nuts and honey) and Turdilli (covered with blond, Calabrian honey).

Olives at a local market

Aerial view of Calabria, Italy

BUCKET LIST

Take a culinary journey through Calabria and get enchanted by not just the food but also the landscape, history and culture of the land.

RIVIERA DEI CEDRI
From the coastal towns of Diamante to Praia a Mare, between the brilliant green of the valleys and the cerulean of the glistening sea, stretches this strip of land, named after the citrus fruit that colours and perfumes the entire surrounding area.

LAND OF CONTRASTS
From hilltop hamlets of Civita to Morano Calabro, discover where the sea and mountains outline the contours of uncontaminated beauty. The region's various civilisations and craftsmanship, folklore and traditions deeply influenced the territory's character.

LESSER-KNOWN GEMS
The Alto Ionio Cosentino is one of the most surprising places in Calabria. Among archaeological ruins, ancient castles, pristine 'blueflag' beaches and lush countryside, this area is ideal to immerse yourself in the wildest Calabria.

ANCIENT BEAUTY
Cities like Crotone and Cosenza are the embodiment of Calabria's many historical wonders. And thanks to green temples like the Sila National Park, captivates with its naturalistic and landscape richness.

COSTA DEGLI DEI
From the seaport of Pizzo Calabro to the town of Nicotera, find bewitching coastlines, with candid beaches, crystal clear waters and seabed full of wondrous life forms, surrounded by towns and villages that merit more than just one visit.

LITTLE PARADISE
For time immemorial, the coastal stretch between Palmi and Bagnara was named Costa Viola (Purple Coast) by virtue of the amethyst shade of its marine waters. The seabed of this coastline hides archaeological and natural treasures of inestimable value.

SOUTHERN SPLENDOUR
From Bivongi to the Gulf of Squillace, amidst lush nature and a breath-taking seabed, stretches Calabria's southernmost coast, where the scent of the sea breeze is lost in the sweet floral aroma that gives it its name: the Costa dei Gelsomini (Jasmine Coast), encompassing 42 municipalities that range from low, sandy beaches to spectacular, sheer cliffs.

Aragonese castle in the upper area of Calabria

'Paradiso del Sub' beach