

In the heart of the Marche region, about 40 minutes drive from Ancona, in the Regional Natural of Gola della Rossa and Frasassi, certified with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, are the spectacular **Frasassi caves**, the largest karst complex in Europe. Some 13 km of limestone caverns have so far been explored and it is reckoned that they may run for up to 35 km.



National Park of Sibillini Mountains

The Park possesses some outstanding natural sights, including the vast upland plains which are a mass of flowers in spring. The most impressive is Piano Grande below the village of Castelluccio, famous across Italy for its lentils. In May and June, this huge expanse of treeless plateau, 1250 mts above sea level, eight kilometres long and five wide, is transformed into a carpet of wild flowers.

Among the poppies you'll find wild tulips and exotic alpine flowers such as *carex buxbaumii*. In the Middle Ages the Sibillini Mountains were known in Europe as a kingdom of demons, necromancers and fairies. There are many legends on the Sibillini area that have been handed for centuries: the mountains take their name from a legend that one of the sibyls - the prophetesses of classical mythology - hid here in a cave on Monte Sibilla known as the Grotta delle Fate (Cave of the Furies) when she was chased out of the underworld.

The name **Conero** comes from the Greek name *Κόμαρος* (*Kómaros*) and indicates the strawberry tree which is common on the slopes of the mountain. Mount Conero is 572 metres high and it is the only coastal high point on the Adriatic sea between Trieste and the Gargano massif in the region of Apulia. Since 1987 it has been a state

park and a protected ecological area (Regional Park) with 18 trails and several archeological/historical sites. Wildlife include Eurasian badger, beech marten, least weasel, yellow-bellied toad, peregrine falcon, kingfisher and pallid swift. Apart the strawberry tree, vegetation include oak, holm oak, Aleppo pine and many others.





Macerata is known across the world for its annual open-air opera festival, taking place in its open-air Arena Sferisterio - a neo-classical arena erected by private subscription in the 1820's. Its centre was almost entirely built between the 16th and 19th centuries. The Renaissance two-tiered arcades of the **Loggia dei Mercanti** on central **Piazza della Libertà** is the town's most striking piece of architecture.



The enchanting town of **Ascoli Piceno** is one of the most important art towns in southern Marche and in central Italy. Travertine was widely used to pave the historic centre.



The underground piscine romane (roman pools) in the City of Fermo which comprise thirty magnificently preserved underground chambers built between 41 & 60 BC to conserve and purify the town's water supply, and regarded as the finest example of their kind in Italy.



Urbino Ducal Palace – Throne Hall and Roof Garden

Offida - The art of pillow lace

It is a typical female tradition of Offida "**the art of pillow lace**", which today is still passed on by generation to generation. In the historical centre there is the monument devoted to the lace makers, by the sculptor Aldo Sergiacomi. The tourist, which walks along the alleys and streets of Offida, will surely come across, especially in the summer evenings many women of Offida of all ages, seated near their front doors, working the pillow lace. A real art, a typically female tradition goes back to the 15th century. At the beginning only the popular class was involved in this work, but gradually the pillow lace's art infected also the religious communities and noble families. The Benedictine nuns, arrived in Offida in



A Region of Truffles

There is in the region a rich production of all major species of truffles, both white and black. The most prized is the **White Truffle** of Sant'Angelo in Vado (PU) (October-November) and in Acqualagna (PU) (October-November). While the Fiera Nazionale del Tartufo Bianco Pregiato (National Prized White Truffle Fair) takes place in Pergola (PU) in October. In Amandola (FM) in the first half of November. **Black Truffles** can be found in abundance above all in Cagli (PU), Sassoferato (AN), Arcevia (AN), in the province of Ascoli Piceno at Acquasanta Terme, Roccafluvione, Comunanza; in the province of Fermo at Montefortino, Amandola; in Camerino (MC),



The **Tender Ascolan olive**, called Picena in Latin classics, has a slightly elongated shape with a uniform colour, from green to straw-yellow: it is crunchy, easy to digest and is by far the best green table olive in the world. The best growing area is close to Ascoli Piceno, in earth rich in decomposed travertine calcareous stone, with ideal water and climate for plants, although the production area is larger.



Montappone, a small medieval town, is well known for the production of **handmade straw hat**. The **Hat Museum** documents all stages of straw processing. The last step concerns straw pressing, giving the hat the final shape. In the museum there are photographs, panels and original machinery. Montappone hosts "The Straw Hat" in July: it's an event that promotes this ancient craft. There are more than two hundred hat makers who show visitors how to make a straw hat. The economy of this little town is based not only on the production of straw hats, but also of handbags made of shavings, rush and other materials. Pottery is popular too.



Extra-virgin olive oil

An olive tree is a precious resource and olive oil is an even greater one. The Marche region has always had an enviable reputation for both. In the 13th century, the ships from the Marche region that called along the Po river would pay their docking fees in olive oil, which was considered of superior value than that from other regions in Italy. Even the Venetians knew of the value of "l'olio de Marchia", and it retailed there at a higher price for its fine aroma and flavour, qualities it still maintains today. The quality and typicality of the region's olive oil are the result of a combination of factors: the numerous local varieties, different from zone to zone, the distinct climate of the Marche region, the traditional growing and harvesting techniques and, last but not least, the well-preserved traditions at the olive presses. The many typical varieties growing in the region are combined with the Frantoio and Leccino olives in differing proportions, bringing forth different characteristics each time. The typical regional

olive oil is slightly fruity and hints of grass, green almonds and artichokes. It has a well-balanced flavour with just a touch of bitterness and spice. Among its varieties well worthy of note: the Coroncina, Piantone di Falerone, Piantone di Mogliano, Sargano di Fermo, Orbetana, Mignola, Carboncella, Raggia and Raggiola. These are just some of the varieties which have re-

Rosso Piceno DOC is the first born in our territory. We have heard about it since ancient times and its name can be traced back to the pre-Roman population of the Picenes. This is a prestigious DOC, recognized by the Protocol in 1968 and then amended later. Its typology Rosso Piceno Superiore is produced in a delimited area: only 13 municipalities in the province of Ascoli Piceno are admitted. It is different from the Rosso Piceno DOC due to a further period of aging in wood that enriches the wine with even more intense and multifaceted hints and aromas, giving it a unique character. Its origin and use in blend of Montepulciano and Sangiovese make this red wine the king of the Piceno territory, which has always been dedicated to the production of these vines.



Offida Pecorino DOCG

Perhaps, the when the mentioned is this case, it is Pecorino is grape variety Offida Pecorino straw yellow reflections. characteristic notes of flow-anise and mineral with a pleasant acid-



first thing you think of name 'Pecorino' is a Roman cheese, but in not. In Offida DOCG, the name of a local with great potential. no DOCG is an elegant white wine with green The scent is typical and of the grape, with its ers, fruit, pineapple, sage. The taste is fresh, long aftertaste and ity.

Maccheroncini di Campofilone

The first written documents referring to this pasta, also known as angels hair date back to the council of Trent in 1560. The Maccheroncini are very thin spaghetti with a squared section, made of flour and eggs. It's a very special handmade pasta and the cut handmade by the local masters its very hard to practices.

