



CORI - ITALY



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CORI, A JEWEL IN THE SHADES OF ROME

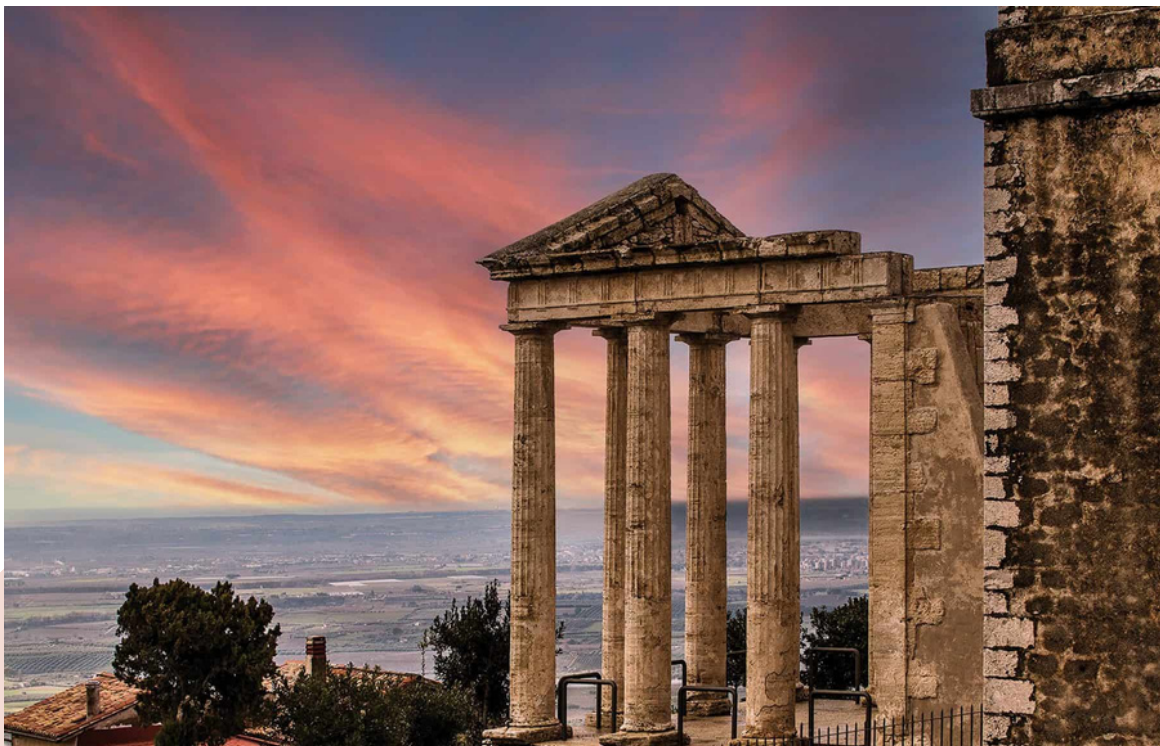
Legends narrate the divine origin of the territory of Cori, anciently known as Cora, and it reveals itself among the alleys and unique views toward the Tyrrhenian Sea. Dardanus, Aeneas, or Corax are the godly heroes of the Troy Battle who spark the foundations of this fabulous town. Just one hour southwards from Rome, and half hour from the sea, Cori is a must-visit town to have a real Italian experience. The archaeological data document the human presence in the town since the Middle Bronze Age (14th century BCE) and hypothesise a stable settlement at least from the early Iron Age (10th-9th century BCE), built on the top of the hill, making it a town older than Rome. During the Archaic age, from the 5th century BCE Cora was urbanistically structured and defended by the mighty polygonal walls, the most ancient visible monuments in the nowadays Cori that have created impressive terraces with more than 2kms of magnificent masonry.

Cora was a well-off and powerful town, rich in commerce, even having its own coin before the Roman hegemony, the coin was named 'corano', and it is hosted in the Louvre of Paris. Silent witnesses of the time passing by are the temples and the rich archaeological areas that are embedded in the own fabric of the town, making it a fascinating place to visit, in which the rituals of time have been preserved. One can admire the magnificent Hercules Temple, with the rank of "national interest monument" (1st century BCE), the Catena Roman Bridge (1st century BCE), the Sulla Tower, the beautiful Temple of Castor and Pollux, hidden in the alleys of Cori, close to the majestic Pozzodorico square, in reality the wells of the ancient town.



Plus, different Mediaeval jewels can be listed, such as the precious Saint Olive Church, a unique example of fusion of eras, where Roman, Mediaeval, Renaissance and Baroque epoques co-exist in a fascinating place that nowadays hosts acoustic concerts and fabulous weddings.

Another incredible place is the Annunziata Chapel, a Sistine Chapel before the Sistine Chapel, financed by ancient international relations that Cori kept with noble Spanish families. The ancient Cora has always kept a large autonomy from Rome, having the status of 'SPQC' (literally "The Senatus and the People from Cora", in other words the ancient form of the Roman Republic), and was never governed by a lordship.



Due to its role and loyalty to Rome, around 1593 Cora received the official colours of the Eternal City, the ochre yellow and the imperial red, in exchange for a Minerva statue from the archaeological sites in Cora (if you ever visit Rome, you can see the Minerva right in front of the Mayor Palace named Campidoglio). Other important colours are the ones of the three historical neighbourhoods (Rione) in which Cori is divided - Signina Rione (yellow-green herald), Ninfina Rione (red- blue herald), Romana Rione (yellow-blue herald).

The historical centre of Cori was heavily damaged during World War 2 bombings, yet it features a well-preserved historical centre, with ten churches, fascinating squares, intriguing archaeological sites, and ever-changing perspectives in a typical Mediaeval centre that cuddles the visitors. Cori is a lively town in the shades of Rome with a unique and ancient character to be discovered.



A PLACE WITH UNIQUE FLAVOURS

Cori has a rich natural heritage, rich of sweet hills, limestone, tuff and volcanic materials, making a superb territory apt for horticulture, vineyards, and olive trees. The cuisine of Cori is deeply rooted in its Mediterranean essence and rural identity, with simple ingredients and savoury flavours, and can be nowadays found in fine restaurants and ancient taverns which Cori is famous for.

Among the most important products of the tradition, we can surely mention wine. In terms of wine, Cori has become one of the most interesting areas in Italy, featuring three indigenous grape varieties that can be mainly found, or almost only, in Cori. Such varieties risked being lost in time, but only at the end of the 20th century were enhanced, and valued in contemporary wines, being awarded at national and international level. Bellone, Malvasia Puntinata and Nero Buono di Cori are the names of the three indigenous grape varieties of Cori. Bellone was already known among the ancient Romans, deriving its name from the goddess Bellona, to which the wine was consecrated, and even Plinius the Elder named Bellone in its poems as “pantastic grape” (literally, ‘the bread-like grapes’, which also indicated the traditional break of the farmers, having Bellone grapes with bread).

Another important massive production encompasses the olives, both for the wonderful extra-virgin olive oil from the indigenous Itrana olives, and the Gaeta table olives. Olive trees represent an important factor of sustainability, together with the vineyards.



In terms of cuisine, another historical product regards the 'petaxone' ham, ham cooked in Nero Buono or Bellone wine together with hay and wild herbs. The first documents with the original mention of the recipe are of the 16th century and they are officially contained in the ancient statutes of Cora.

An important tradition which is still kept is the Easter biscuit production - usually, two forms of biscuits were crafted, namely: horse-shaped doughnuts and girl-shaped doughnuts with boiled eggs nested inside the doe. Another typical biscuit made by most of the Cori families are the biscuits cooked in boiling water called 'scottolate', literally 'scalded'.

Cori also has specific cultivations, like the local saffron and ancient grains. Among the most interesting types of pasta produced, we can surely mention fettuccine (sort of handmade linguine pasta) and strozzapreti (literally meaning 'strangling priests') pasta. They normally get paired with ragu sauce (what the world knows as Bolognese sauce) or local mushrooms.



THE NATURE AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

Cori has a vast territory, encompassing sweet hills, mountains and natural areas. The entire area is crossed from north to south by the Francigena Route, one of the most important pilgrim routes in Europe, connecting Canterbury-Rome-Jerusalem. The presence of the Francigena Route encourages slow tourism and connects people from all over the world. One of the most interesting areas in Cori touched by Francigena is the Lake of Giulianello, a natural monument with super nature, refreshing and beautiful. The countryside is well preserved and it hosts vineyards, olive trees, grains, kiwis and saffron. From time to time, you might stop to wait for sheep to cross the road.

If you like the mountains, Cori is a great venue for downhill, trekking and slackline. And if you simply like to walk and breathe fresh air, it is an amazing place full of shady forests rich in flora and birds.



FOLKLORE & TRADITIONS

The long story and traditions are kept alive by numerous associations which operate to organise events and gather young people or seniors.

It is fundamental to mention the tradition of Sbandieratori, literally 'flag throwers' or 'flag weavers', folklore groups which inherit the 16th century tradition of condottieri, fine bilingual diplomats, who controlled the armies during the battles by moving the flags, as each movement was a precise military operation to be executed by the armies. Through combined choreographies, Renaissance music and drum marches, the groups of flag throwers in Cori gather youth to get passionate about this ancient tradition. Not only, Cori features a Renaissance dance group, researching on the former noble court dance.

Every year Cori hosts three major events. The first - Every second Sunday of May, there is the long parade in honour of the Virgin Lady of the Rescue, full of colours and side events. The second - In June and July, there is a historical Renaissance parade named 'Carosello Storico', a reenactment in honour of the Virgin Lady and Saint Olive, in which the three historical neighbourhoods (Rione Signina, Rione Ninfina, Rione Romana) compete to get the Palio, the honour of the holy protectors, featuring all the local society groups wearing traditional costumes while crossing the town. The peak point of the Carosello is the horse race where the knights of each Rione compete while riding their horses to catch most of the rings with their dagger.



The third - Latium Festival is one of the biggest folklore festivals in Italy part of the CIOFF, a department of UNESCO promoting folklore and festivals. Every July and August it hosts dozens of groups from everywhere in the world featuring their chants, their dances and traditions in a unique and fascinating event.

Another engaging and niche event is the “Singing Lake”, hosted on the shores of the Lake of Giulianello. Normally, it is held in September, and acoustic music and the thousand-old tradition of the Passion Chants are sung by the old women of Giulianello, recapping a mother-daughter relationship whose roots are still preserved by informal groups of women.



CULTURE & GREAT MINDS

A few great minds have put Cori in the spotlight of literature, arts, theatre, and science. Among them, we can surely mention:

- Elio Filippo Accrocca, one of the major writers of Italy after World War 2.
- Alessandro Marchetti, one of the world pioneers in aeronautic engineering.
- One of its aircraft models was also used by Hayao Miyazaki in the anime film “Porco Rosso”.
- Rosa Tomei, poet who was partner of the famous Trilussa, writer and intellectual of Rome, living across the 19th and 20th century.
- Cesare Chiominto, writer and teacher, the ideal father of Cori dialect.
- Luigi Pistilli, brilliant actor with main roles in *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966) (as the priest Pablo Ramírez, brother of Eli Wallach's character Tuco) and in *For a Few Dollars More* as Groggy. He is considered one of the finest country's interpreters of the work of Bertold Brecht.
- Enrico Appetito, one of the greatest Italian photographers, stage photographer for Antonioni, Monicelli, Visconti, Godard, Fellini etc.
- Sandro Penna, among the most important poets of the 20th century in Italy.
- Maria Levi Montalcini, honorary citizen of Cori, awarded in 1986 with the Medicine Prize.

Cori has a modern theatre, a rich museum, and a lively public library with an historical archive which encourage studies and conferences.



THE LOCAL DIALECT

Last interesting fact about Cori. People speak a dialect which has its own terms and rhythm. Cesare Chiominto has been the most important poet enhancing its usage laying the foundations for a grammar. Some of the most interesting expressions: 'Jo' is the article 'the' that is used in Cori dialect, and its pronunciation is like 'yo' (as rappers do).

Another funny way to distinguish who is from Cori and who is not, it is about the expression 'jeso' or 'jesoca' as an expression of surprise or happiness. Cori dialect is full of specific expressions which are part of the rural and colourful farming tradition. Among many, rótio is the expression that indicates "a group of people chatting together on the street sitting on a chair".



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