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A magical cornucopia, rich with nature

The Sibillini Mountains National Park is a protected area covering approximately 700 km² of land that includes the homonymous mountain range and surrounding hillside where medieval hamlets, Romanesque churches, castles and abbeys blend harmoniously into the rural landscape. Adding to their charm and magic these mountains are also steeped in legends, including that of the sorceress Sibilla (one of the Sybils of antiquity), from whom the massif derives its name.

"...Land of fairies, necromancers and horrors of all kinds..." Thus the Sibillini Mountains were depicted throughout Europe in the 15th and 16th century. This fantastic, harsh and wild world has always sparked the imagination, dreams and hopes of many famous writers, such as Andrea da Barberino, who writes about the Sibillini in "Guerrin Meschino" (1409), the French Antoine de La Sale who describes "Le Paradis de la Reine Sibylle" and the German Felix Hemmerlin who compares Monte

The environments of the Park

The action of nature and the activity of man, who has inhabited this territory for millennia, have created an extraordinary variety of environments and landscapes. The biodiversity of our Park includes over 1900 species of flora, about 50 species of mammals, 114 species of nesting birds, 16 species of reptiles, 14 of amphibians and 2 of fish, as well as numerous invertebrates, including 831 species of butterflies. The Park also includes 18 Special Conservation Areas and 5 Special Protection Areas, in accordance with European directives for the protection of habitats and species of community interest. The hills at the foot of the mountains are a criss-cross mosaic of small fields and oak woods. The mountain environment on the other hand, is characterised by beech woods, vast prairies, wild valleys and gorges, including those of Fiastrone, Ambro, Acquasanta, Infernaccio and Valnerina. Castelluccio di Norcia, the highest inhabited centre in the Apennines at 1452 meters above sea level,

The Paths of the Park

When conceiving our reception and actualisation strategy for the Sibillini our main goal was to ensure the Park would be open to all, in every season. This led us to create Information Points, Environmental Education Centres, Museums, and Visitor Centres where one can discover different aspects and details of particular interest of the territory, as well as find out about the numerous itineraries and routes through which to discover the treasures of the Sibillini in all its multi-faceted and fascinating characteristics. We have also ensured there are routes with different levels of accessibility, including routes for those with reduced mobility (**Paths for All NT1 and NT2**). By travelling along the **Grande Via del Parco**, a panoramic route we have highlighted among the existing mountain roads, one comes across the various villages of the Sibillini and discovers the most interesting nooks of these settlements so rich in history, whether it be an enchanting historical centre or an isolated and suggestive hamlet.

A territory to be enjoyed with all the senses

Straddling the Marche and Umbria, the Park is a crossroads of ancient gastronomic traditions: pastoral civilization meets *norcineria*, a locally specific form of traditional butchery, and agriculture, with iconic products such as the lentil of Castelluccio and the *mela rosa* (pink apple) of the Sibillini. The people of the Sibillini Mountains produce extraordinary cured meats, including the renowned *ciauscolo*, but the history of this territory is first of all that of transhumance and sheep farming: the most important cheese is undoubtedly *pecorino*, but there are also excellent cow and goat cheeses available to accompany the various types of local honey or jams made with ancient varieties of fruit. The list of the gastronomic riches of the Park does not end here: this uncontaminated territory offers excellent chestnuts and *marroni*, mushrooms, chickpeas, *cicerchie* (chickling peas, or in their latin name, *Lathyrus sativus*), trout, flours (wheat, corn and *roveja* - known in English as field pea or by its latin name *Pisum sativum arvense*),

Behavioural guidelines

Here at the Sibillini National Park we believe the beauties of nature are a common good and everyone has the right to enjoy them, including future generations. By adopting some responsible behaviours we can ensure that our desire for contact with nature is satisfied without disturbing the delicate balance of ecosystems.

To avoid causing damage, even unknowingly, be sure to find out about the rules, regulations and existing provisions (for example, sleeping in tents, use of drones, status of paths) at any Visitor Centre, Information Point, Carabinieri Park Station, or on our website: www.sibillini.net.

Our four-legged friends can accompany us almost anywhere so long as they are kept on a leash; in the most sensitive environments, however, dogs are prohibited. Detailed information is available on our website or in information pamphlets provided.



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Sibilla to the Mountain of Venus, imagined to be inhabited by a beautiful sorceress and her maidens. On a more practical note, the Sibillini are a calcareous mountain range of about twenty peaks with an altitude exceeding two thousand meters. The highest peak is M. Vettore (2476 m), followed by Pizzo della Regina (2332 m), the summit of M. Priora, a mighty mountain at the foot of which rises the hermitage of S. Leonardo. Some other mountains of note are Monte Sibilla (2173 m), where the cave of the mythical Sybil can be found, M. Bove (2169 m), with imposing rocky cliffs that have become the kingdom of the golden eagle and the Apennine chamois, Palazzo Borghese (2145 m), so named because it recalls a Roman noble building, and M. Castel Manardo (1917 m), whose name originates from an ancient noble family, the Counts of Manardo.

The mountains are aligned along a single main axis and can be distinguished into two sides. On the Adriatic side the landscape is characterised by narrow valleys such as the Aso, Tenna, Ambro and Fiastrone valleys, which also feed the artificial basin of the stunning Lake Fiastra. The Tyrrhenian side is instead characterised by three high-altitude depressions – Pian Grande, Pian Perduto and Pian Piccolo – and by the Valnerina valley, carved by the river Nera, the main tributary of the Tiber. The entire summit area was profoundly shaped by the Quaternary glaciers millions of years ago. Their action is still recognisable today in the splendid glacial cirques of the Valle del Lago di Pilato, Val di Panico, Val di Bove, the high valleys of the Ambro, Tenna and Val di Tela and in the valleys below. The traces of karst geomorphic processes are also noticeable in the plains of Castelluccio and in the furrows and cavities of the rocky walls of valleys where massive limestone emerges, such as those of Tenna, Ambro and Fiastrone.

dominates the highland plateaus constellated with lentil fields which in late spring produce swathes of spectacular blossoms. The summits in the Park are unapproachable, with sharp ridges and rocky precipices, such as those of M. Bove Nord (2112 m) and Pizzo del Diavolo (2410 m), and evident signs of the last glaciations, such as Lago Pilato (a lake that takes its name from a legend connected to Pontius Pilate) which lies within a glacial cirque at almost 2000m of altitude. Endemic plants of arctic-alpine origin live in the high meadows, such as Apennine edelweiss, Apennine wormwood (white genepi or *Artemisia eriantha*), distorted pheasant's eye (distorted Adonis), eight-petal mountain-avens (*Dryas octopetala*), bilberry, bearberry and dwarf willows. In terms of fauna, wolves, wild cats, porcupines, roe deer, snow voles, golden eagles, peregrine falcons, rock partridges, coral coughts, Orsini vipers, spectacled salamanders, Italian newts, Mediterranean trouts, freshwater crayfish, Alpine longhorn beetles, Apollo butterflies, and the small fairy shrimp *Chirocephalus marchesonii*, which in all the world has been identified only in Lago Pilato, all roam over the mountains. Moreover, the Park has reintroduced deer and Apennine chamois since 2005 and 2008 respectively.

From the Grande Via del Parco you can also easily reach the **Nature Trails** . These routes are not too demanding, suitable for inexperienced hikers, yet they still allow you to enjoy the extraordinary natural landscapes, shaped by centuries of human history and still maintaining that flavour of rural and pastoral life that is being irretrievably forgotten elsewhere. The **Hiking Trails** grant an experience of contact with wild nature and the magical world of the peaks. These are mainly high-altitude itineraries, picked out from the dense tapestry of paths woven by centuries of transhumance (pastoral nomadism), for which training, suitable equipment, and above all, an adequate knowledge of the rhythms and temporal shifts of the mountains are required. For an unforgettable experience we recommend the **Grande Anello dei Sibillini** , a nine-day hiking trail (ca. 120 km) that unfolds along the perimeter of the Park. The Park offers 14 different Bike Routes, to be completed in one day, as well as the **Grande Anello Bike** , an itinerary of 170 km along which one can discover the Park over 4-5 days. The routes described are part of the Park's actualisation strategy, and therefore the Park ensures their maintenance. It is possible to follow other existing paths, however the Park does not monitor or carry out maintenance on these, and the presence of signs is not guaranteed.

and truffles (including the "Nero di Norcia" and the precious white truffle the town of Amandola celebrates with a gastronomic festival). Thanks to these extraordinary products of the earth, dishes that combine tradition and culinary innovation come to life with a unique flavour. And lastly, the traditional digestive liqueurs of the area: *mistrà*, *vin cotto* and the typical gentian liqueur. To facilitate the discovery of the flavours and wisdom of the territory the Park has created a **Sibilla Menu**, a type of "gastronomic itinerary", which forges a direct supply chain between agricultural producers and restaurateurs within the Park. In other words, a menu that unites the most delicious and particular dishes of each restaurant, prepared with the products of this land. Taste goes hand in hand with commitment: hence the birth of the **Club Qualità Parco**. The Club brings together accommodation, catering, agricultural and agri-food businesses that are actively participating in the conservation of environmental quality and in the representation and promotion of the territory. In recognition of these businesses' valuable contributions, the Park awards a Park Emblem to those who value natural and cultural resources, guarantee ecological management of their business and raise awareness of sustainable tourism among their guests.

Visit the Park

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Printed
by Odoysa srl

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Park Guides



www.sibillini.net → Guided Tours



Discover the magic of the Parco Nazionale dei Monti Sibillini

Visit the Park



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