



Alghero & the Northwest

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Best Places to Eat

- » La Botteghina (p119)
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- » La Guardiola (p130)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hotel El Faro (p206)
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- » Villa Las Tronas (p206)

Why Go?

Sardinia's northwestern corner is a fine example of how popular resorts can fit seamlessly alongside quiet beaches and remote national parks – visitors can flit between historical and coastal beauties, dip into urbanity, and rest in remote national parks and deserted beaches, all the while tapping into the region's unique character.

The coast is this region's belle of the ball, with brilliant stretches of sand, heady cliffs and rocky coves that dip into the sea. But head inland, and surprises await – architectural and archaeological gems litter the sun-bleached countryside, a string of Pisan-Romanesque churches stand testimony to glories past, while tumbledown ruins tell of prehistoric times.

The two cities – the petite, attractive Alghero and cosmopolitan Sassari – speak of their historical heritage: one with an Iberian sensibility, the other Genoese graces. This entire area seems less Sardinian than other parts, less rural and less reserved, but enchanting all the way.

When to Go

Join the masses to munch a mountain of sea urchins in January, at Alghero's Sagra del Bogamari food festival. April sees the start of the wonderful carnival season, best witnessed in Alghero's *centro storico* (historic centre). One of Sardinia's most prestigious festivals, Cavalcata Sarda, takes place in Sassari during the month of May – thousands gather to sing and dance while watching acrobatic horse riding. The summer and autumn months of July, August and September are made for hitting the busy beaches of Riviera del Corallo or seeking out hidden swimming spots.



Alghero & the Northwest Highlights

- 1 Spy on albino donkeys and birds of prey in the **Parco Nazionale dell'Asinara** (p129)
- 2 Have a swim at the northwest's most stunning beach, the **Spiaggia della Pelosa** (p128)
- 3 Weave through the medieval lanes and robust ramparts in **Alghero** (p112)
- 4 See how prehistoric cavemen lived in the Grotta di San Michele in **Ozieri** (p138), then check out their tools in the town's Museo Archeologico
- 5 Dive into the Mediterranean's largest underwater lake and explore the fairy-tale **Grotta di Nettuno** (p124)
- 6 Take in the marvellous sea views from the windswept and rugged **Capo Caccia** (p124) headland
- 7 Wander through the old town's medieval lanes in **Castelsardo** (p130) and look over to Corsica from the impregnable hilltop **castello** (castle)