



Cagliari & the Sarrabus

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Best Places to Stay

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Why Go?

Built high and mighty around a rocky citadel, Cagliari gazes out to the glistening Med, basks in southern sunshine and looks proudly back on almost 3000 years of history. Sardinia's cultured, open-minded capital makes a fine base if you're seeking more than the classic sun-and-sea mix, with a clutch of museums, baroque churches and fortifications begging exploration.

Still a busy, working port, Cagliari hasn't been prettified for the benefit of tourists and is all the more interesting for it. Sightseeing aside, this city is all about simple pleasures, be it fresh seafood in a Marina trattoria, crowd-watching at a pavement cafe or a stroll through Il Castello's medieval alleyways.

Slightly east of town you find yourself in a different world. The mountainous hinterland of the Sarrabus is an untamed, silent wilderness and the magnificent salt-white beaches of Villasimius and the Costa Rei are all but deserted outside of the peak summer months.

When to Go

Lent kicks off with carnival parades and rounds out with evocative Easter processions, but for true pilgrims nothing beats the saintly shenanigans at the Festa di Sant'Efisio in early May. Spring is a fine time to hike the woods and granite peaks of the Monte dei Sette Fratelli. Summer attracts a bronzed, party-loving crowd to Poetto, and sun-worshippers to the gorgeous beaches of Villasimius and the Costa Rei further east. Join the twitchers to spot the flamingos that stalk Cagliari's salt marshes in winter.



Cagliari & the Sarrabus Highlights

- 1** Discover the nooks and crannies of **Il Castello** (p35), Cagliari's medieval citadel
- 2** Sunbathe by day and party the night away at **Poetto Beach** (p43)
- 3** Sip a sundowner at hilltop **Caffè Librarium Nostrum** (p47) as the city is dramatically illuminated
- 4** Don your walking boots and head for the pine-scented hills of **Monte dei Sette Fratelli** (see boxed text, p53)
- 5** Dive into the lush blue waters off the **Capo Carbonara** (see boxed text, p52), a marine reserve
- 6** Enjoy a fascinating romp through Sardinian history at the artefact-packed **Museo Archeologico Nazionale** (p36)
- 7** Give in to temptation at old-world **Durke** (p48), a wonderland of traditional Sardinian sweets
- 8** Sample the pick of the region's wines or join a cookery class at **Cantine Argiolas** (see boxed text, p51) in Serdiana