



# Alghero & the Northwest

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Agriturismo Sa Mandra (p127)
- ➔ Agriturismo Porticciolo (p129)
- ➔ Trattoria Lo Romani (p119)
- ➔ San Gavino (p133)
- ➔ La Botteghina (p119)

## Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Hotel El Faro (p216)
- ➔ Agriturismo Sa Mandra (p216)
- ➔ Anedras Hotel (p215)
- ➔ Villa Las Tronas (p216)

## Why Go?

Inspiring natural beauty goes hand-in-hand with history and urban charm in Sardinia's northwestern corner.

The obvious belle of the ball is the coastline with its brilliant sandy beaches, heady cliffs and hidden rocky coves. But head inland and surprises await – architectural and archaeological gems litter the green, stony countryside. Most notably, a string of Pisan Romanesque churches testify to medieval glories and tumbledown ruins attest to the presence of thriving prehistoric communities.

A history of foreign rule has left an indelible mark on the area, not only in bricks and mortar but also in spirit. Alghero, the northwest's main gateway and a one-time Catalan stronghold, has a distinctly Spanish feel, while Sassari owes its cosmopolitan outlook to its past as a Genoese colony. In many ways, the entire area seems less Sardinian than other parts of the island, less rural and less reserved, but is no less enchanting for it.

## When to Go

- ➔ Join the masses to chow down on sea urchins at Alghero's Sagra del Bogamari food festival, usually held between February and March.
- ➔ The best months to tour the hinterland and its cultural and archaeological sites are April and May – the weather's warm and sunny, the roads are quiet and the countryside is blooming with spring colour.
- ➔ One of Sardinia's most prestigious festivals, Sassari's Cavalcata Sarda, draws huge crowds. Thousands flock to the city in May to watch costumed processions and displays of acrobatic horse riding.
- ➔ The summer and autumn months of June, July, August and September are made for hanging out on the beach and cruising the rocky coastline. Expect crowds and high-season prices.

# Alghero & the Northwest Highlights

- 1 Spiaggia della Pelosa** (p130) Diving into Caribbean-coloured waters at this idyllic beach, one of Sardinia's most spectacular.
- 2 Sea Walls** (p114) Revelling in dreamy sunset views on Alghero's historic *bastioni*.
- 3 Parco Nazionale dell'Asinara** (p131) Watching out for albino donkeys in the rocky wilds of this remote, deserted island.
- 4 Le Prigionette Nature Reserve** (p128) Walking and lapping up the scenery in this unspoiled pocket of aromatic Mediterranean scrubland.
- 5 Grotta di Nettuno** (p129) Going underground at Capo Caccia's fairy-tale cave complex.
- 6 Nuraghe Santu Antine** (p143) Boning up on Sardinia's prehistoric past at this extraordinary nuraghic site.
- 7 Castello** (p134) Strolling Castelsardo's hilltop *centro storico* and gazing seawards from its impregnable castle.
- 8 Cavalcata Sarda** (p138) Getting into the festive swing at Sassari's great headline festival.

