



Molise Italian Studies

Adult Study Abroad & Community-Based Global Learning



ADULT STUDY ABROAD: GRAND TOUR OF MOLISE Between History & Taste

Explore how **land**, **cuisine**, and **tradition** shape daily life across one of Italy's most intact regions as you trace Molise's ancient pathways of craft and culture, from transhumance routes and Benedictine abbeys to bell foundries, cheese dairies, artisan workshops, and Tintilia vineyards, learning from the people who steward this land and its stories.



Castel del Giudice (4 nights):

Day 1



Arrival & Castel del Giudice

- Arrival & hotel check-in
- Castel Del Giudice, on the border between Abruzzo and Molise, is a charming village in a mountainous area known for being an excellent example of rebirth, a gem that has managed to transform these inland areas into beauty and excellence. Thanks to a strong synergy between the municipal administration, citizens, and entrepreneurs, an ancient rural complex was restored and transformed into *Borgotufi Albergo Diffuso*, a scattered hotel with a wellness center and other high-quality services, surrounded by apple orchards grown on previously uncultivated and abandoned land.
- Dinner at the hotel and overnight stay.



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Day 2



Castel del Giudice & Capracotta

- Breakfast at the hotel
- AM: Transfer to Capracotta & visit to *Giardino della Flora Appenninica*
 - **Capracotta**, where the mountains whisper to the shepherds, is a small village located at 1,421 meters (4,662 feet) above sea level and situated among extensive meadows and small hamlets. The core of Capracotta, as it appears today, originated in the Middle Ages during the Lombard conquest of Southern Italy (late 6th - early 7th century AD) and developed in the following centuries through the practice of transhumance, the movement of herds between Abruzzo and Puglia. Even today, the cobbled paths are traveled by the few shepherds who pass on the tradition and lead their livestock to the mountain pastures in the summer season.
 - In the surrounding green areas stands the *Giardino della Flora Appenninica* (Garden of the Apennine Flora), a natural botanical garden where a considerable variety of plants are preserved, many of which have been saved from extinction.
- Lunch at family-run farm
 - The farm produces high-quality yogurt and milk, the raw material for the typical dairy products of the area, which we will taste along with other Molise delicacies typical of the mountain culinary tradition. The main dish of the day will be *pezzata*, an ancient recipe dating back to the period when shepherds practiced transhumance.
- PM: Visit *Palazzo Baronale* (Baronial palace) & *Museo della Civiltà Contadina* (Museum of Peasant Civilization)
 - Walking along the streets of the village, we will reach the Baronial Palace, where the Museum of Peasant Civilization will take us back in time among the tools and instruments of daily life of the mountain people.
- Return to Castel del Giudice for dinner & overnight stay at the hotel



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Day 3



Castel del Giudice & Agnone

- Breakfast at hotel
- AM: Transfer to Agnone & visit to *Caseificio Di Nucci*
 - **Agnone**, the Athens of Sannio, lies on a rocky spear in the mountainous areas of Molise (Alto Molise), while the surrounding territory is made up of forests, pastures, and agriculture land. It boasts a bell-making tradition unique in the world, a rich food and wine culture, and an exceptional craft tradition of copper, cheese, and more.
 - We will be guided into the artisanal laboratory, where we can discover, amidst the captivating aromas and the magic of hands moving in the steaming atmosphere, how **Caciocavallo di Agnone**, scamorza, straciatina, and other traditional Molise cheeses are made. We will then enter the *Museo di Arte Casearia e della Transumanza* (Museum of Dairy Art & Transhumance), dedicated to the history of animal husbandry, as well as the ancient tools and techniques of cheesemaking. The tour culminates with a tasting.
- Typical lunch at a cozy inn in the heart of the village
- PM: Tour of **artisan workshops** & historic buildings
 - Craftsmanship in Agnone is a centuries-old art and was the reason for trade between the coppersmiths of the village and the city of Venice, architectural references to which can be found in the “Venetian” district.
 - Visit *Palazzo Minutolo*, with its characteristic goldsmith's workshop; *Palazzo San Francesco*, a former convent with a library of ancient volumes, including a copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the cast of the original Oscan Tablet; *Palazzo della Città*, dating back to the fifteenth century, and the marble fountain, dating back to 1881, the year in which the first urban aqueduct was built; and a craftsman's workshop, whose origins date back to the late 1800s, when the founder began producing scales and other weighing and measuring instruments, later adding copper processing.
 - Visit the centuries-old **Pontifical Marinelli Bell Foundry** (the oldest Italian foundry and one of the oldest in the world), where the Marinelli family will open the doors of their treasure trove to reveal, step by step, the ancient rituals of bronze forging and instrument production. The master bell founder will let us appreciate sounds and tones in a truly unusual concert.
- Return to Castel del Giudice for dinner & overnight stay at hotel



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Day 4



Castel del Giudice, Castel San Vincenzo, Scapoli, & Isernia

- Breakfast at hotel
- AM: Transfer to Castel San Vincenzo & visit Benedictine Abbey
 - Our journey continues in the Upper Volturno Valley, near the Abruzzo, Lazio & Molise National Park. On the slopes of the Mainerde mountains lies the small village of **Castel San Vincenzo**, home to an ancient Benedictine monastery of the same name. The site houses the excavations of the 5th-century Lombard abbey on the left bank of the river and on the right bank the new 12th-century abbey, which is still open to visitors and houses a Benedictine community. In the archaeological area we will find preserved frescoes, among the most important examples of early medieval European painting.
 - During the journey, it will be possible to admire the Lake of Castel San Vincenzo, a turquoise jewel surrounded by forests and the peaks of the Mainerde mountains that are reflected in the clear waters.
- Lunch, for which we will be welcomed by Stefano, Chef and Sommelier of the renowned Locanda Belvedere
- PM: Visit Scapoli & *Museo Internazionale della Zampogna* (International Museum of the Reed-Pipe)
 - The village of **Scapoli** is a hub of master craftsmen who produce the *zampogna*, an ancient musical instrument of shepherds. Nestled here among the mountains, the musical culture materializes in the last historical workshops in Italy, where the precious and seasoned woods of olive, cherry, and plum trees are carved using techniques unchanged for centuries. The International Bagpipe Museum and its permanent exhibition preserve these jewels as a testament to the skills and traditions of a people.
- PM: Visit National Museum of the Palaeolithic & tour historic center of Isernia
 - We will conclude the day with a visit to the unique and extraordinary **National Paleolithic Museum of Isernia**, a must-see for those who want to discover the stages of human evolution through prehistoric tools and behaviors, as well as the organization of the oldest human encampments in present-day Europe from about 700,000 years ago. We will continue with a brief visit to the historic center of the city of Isernia.
- Return to Castel del Giudice for dinner & overnight stay at hotel



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Colle d'Anchise (2 nights):

Day 5



Castel del Giudice & Frosolone

- Breakfast at hotel and check-out
- AM: Transfer to Frosolone & visit *Museo Civico dei Ferri Taglienti* (Museum of Knives)
 - After breakfast, we will reach **Frosolone**, a beautiful town in the province of Isernia known for its historical craftsmanship in the production of knives and other bladed tools, a tradition spanning five generations. Frosolone is the final destination of the ancient pastoral ritual of transhumance, which is repeated every year, covering approximately 180 kilometers along ancient sheep tracks and trails. The Colantuono family is the undisputed protagonist of this Molise tradition and identity. Its members will give us a glimpse of this ancient and unique life, made up of traditions and customs jealously preserved; an undisputed historical, archaeological, anthropological and naturalistic heritage that has obtained recognition from UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- Typical lunch at Bar Trattoria La Taverna
- PM: Transfer to Petrella Tifernina & visit *Azienda Agricola Colle Sereno*
 - In the afternoon we will enter the territory of Petrella Tifernina, an ancient municipality in the province of Campobasso with probable Samnite origins. More precisely, we are in the Colle Sereno area, from which a historical agricultural and wine company of the region takes its name. On the hillside, among the woods, a large expanse cultivated with vines and olive trees dominates the valley and the inexorable flow of the Biferno river. We will learn about the different wines, including the native *Tintilia*, an extraordinary wine of ancient tradition.
 - As evening falls, we will reach **La Piana dei Mulini**, a delightful scattered hotel created from an ancient mill in the heart of Molise, in the municipality of Colle d'Anchise.
- Dinner & overnight stay at La Piana dei Mulini



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<p>Day 6</p> 	<p><u>Colle d'Anchise, Busso, & Sepino</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakfast at hotel• AM: Transfer to Busso & visit <i>Di Iorio Tartufi</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ After breakfast, we will reach the town of Busso. The Di Iorio family has been passionate about truffles for three generations and will guide us in discovering the white gold of Molise. We will go with Vincenzo into the woods, following the expert dogs in the exciting search for the fantastic tuber and discovering the places, tricks, and secrets of an expert truffle hunter.• Lunch<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We will return to the company to enjoy the proverbial hospitality of the Di Iorio family during a rich tasting based on truffles.• PM: Transfer to Sepino and visit Archaeological Area of Saepinum (Altilia)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The site is located along the ancient <i>Pescasseroli-Candela tratturo</i> (transhumance route), 3 kilometers north of the current village of Sepino. The Roman city, founded in the 2nd century BC, reached its maximum splendor in the Augustan age, between the 2nd century BC and the 1st century AD. It has the classic urban layout with a decumanus, still paved, and a cardo. The city wall delimits its boundaries with four monumental gates (Porta Terravecchia, Porta Tamaro, Porta Bojano and Porta Benevento), the theater, the baths, the forum, the basilica, the campus-pool-portico complex, the macellum and two residential quarters.○ This is followed by a visit to the inhabited village of Sepino, on the slopes of the Matese mountains, with a relaxing walk in the medieval area among narrow streets, decorated balconies, and numerous fountains.• Return to Colle d'Anchise for dinner and overnight stay at La Piana dei Mulini
<p>Day 7</p>	<p><u>Departure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakfast at hotel• Return to Rome or Naples, or continue with a tour extension



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What's Included:

- Six nights in a 4-star hotel with breakfast and dinner
- Five lunches at typical inns/restaurants (drinks included with meals)
- Transfers via private shuttle for the entire duration of the tour (& airport pickup & dropoff)
- Qualified tour guide for the entire duration of the tour and for all scheduled visits
- Entrance fees for all activities and visits included in the program
- Pre-departure, 24-hour on-site, & re-integration support
- Optional extensions prior to or following your program
- Difr Dive Intercultural Citizenship Short Course
 - 4-hour virtual pre-departure workshop
 - Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI®) and debrief
 - Facilitated AFS Global Up Abroad program leading to the Global Competence Certificate
 - Reflective workbook & Difr IC microcredential

Cost: Starting at \$2,495/person

Time Period: Year-round

Health & Safety

- The safety, security, and well-being of participants is our first priority. Molise Italian Studies provides 24-hour bilingual onsite support and an emergency phone number in case of serious safety or health issues. In the event of an emergency that affects multiple participants Molise Italian Studies will coordinate the immediate response with local officials, U.S. embassy and consular officials, and participants' families, including confirming the safety of all participants.
- We recommend that all participants establish a personal travel insurance policy.
- Hospitals are located in Isernia, Agnone, and Campobasso.