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Tourism of the passions in Basilicata, from herbs to the stars / Art and scenery in ancient hamlets, workshops, guided tours

Potenza (ots) -

From astronomy to art and scenery in ancient hamlets, from workshops to guided tours in parks and gardens among wild herbs and flowers, fairy tales and magic: Basilicata opens up to experiential tourism, allowing visitors to live out and share their passions.

Off the usual tourist trail, the region offers visitors many original opportunities to rediscover places of true anthropological beauty, culture and tradition and recharge by immersing themselves in nature, rediscovering the charm of traditions, sampling typical dishes and practising outdoor sports.

Lucania, with its incredible biodiversity protected by two national parks, three regional parks and several nature reserves, is the ideal place to discover wild herbs, flowers and medicinal plants during an excursion with experts in alimurgy, the science that studies the use of edible wild plants, better known today as 'foraging'.

To find out more, visit the Conservatory of Ethnobotany and Hortus Basiliano in Castelluccio Superiore, a garden containing about 150 mostly native medicinal plants; the Park of Colours in Castelgrande (Potenza) dedicated to the famous botanist Guglielmo Gasparrini and also boasting a 'Butterfly House' containing live butterflies in a tropical micro habitat. The Sanseverino Botanical Garden in Grumento Nova and the Herb House in Pomarico for learning about and recognising spontaneous herbs are also not to be missed.

With its very low light pollution, Basilicata is also the ideal place for admiring the night sky in the countryside and mountains or around small hilltop villages. Visitors can feel in direct contact with the universe in several ways: at the Anzi Astronomical Observatory, one of the most respected in Italy for its scientific and astronomical activity, where it is possible to admire around 4.500 sparkling stars; the Museum of Science and Space-Sparkme Space Academy in Matera, a site dedicated to the spread of scientific knowledge offering immersive visits in the world of science and space; and the Castelgrande Space Debris Observatory, with two domes and two telescopes at an altitude of 1,258 metres.

Another original and exciting way to discover the territory is through fairy tale and magic. Here, the journey starts in Rapone, the so-called 'village of fairy tales', and with a book, 'Lo Cunto de Li Cunti', written in 1600 by the Neapolitan Giambattista Basile who, inspired by the Lucania region, gathered and translated numerous folk tales. Rapone Fairytale Festival is a community project giving new life to the most beautiful fairy tales of all time through an artistic-cultural route. There is also the five fairy tales trail, the multimedia museum 'C.E.R.A. una volta' and an adventure park with trails devoted to fairy tale characters.

The tour continues towards Albano di Lucania, the 'town of Magic' that was already the object of research during Ernesto De Martino's expeditions to Lucania in the 1950s, with the 'La Rocca del Cappello' ritual route, and passes through Colobraro with its enthralling 'Sogno di una notte a quel paese' initiative, to reach Agromonte, the town of riddles, among the peaks of the Pollino National Park, declared a Unesco natural heritage site in 2015. Here it is possible to admire the loricated pine, described by many as the 'living fossil' or the 'dinosaur of trees', the undisputed protagonist of this magical and extraordinary scenario.

Then there are the workshops combining outdoor activities and the discovery of new places, ancient traditions and tasty local dishes: in Lavello, the 'Bloom essence of nature', to coincide with the blossoming of the numerous lavender fields; in Grottole, to learn the art of the master cheesemaker and make your own cheese; and also ceramics and papier-mâché workshops and camera trapping courses with Ceas staff in the Pollino National Park.

Visitors can also ride donkeys with farmers on the ancient sheep trails or immerse themselves in forests with guides certified by the Forest Therapy Institute in order to reap the psychological and physiological benefits of trees.

For more information: basilicataturistica.it

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