Fall in love with PONZA: your ready-to-go guide
Ponza is the largest island of the Pontine Archipelago and is situated in front of the Gulf of Gaeta. The archipelago consists of two groups of islands of volcanic origin: in addition to Ponza, the first one includes Gavi, Zannone and Palmarola, while the second includes Ventotene and Santo Stefano. The idea of creating a small guide to the most beautiful places on the island arose from the love for this unique land and the desire to share its breathtaking natural masterpieces with you. What awaits you on this beautiful island? A sea with a rich and varied seabed: flippers and goggles are all that’s needed to venture between the damselfish and kingfish, mottled wrasse and neon blue chromis, marbled pink and Canary red scorpionfish. Happy reading &

**BEACHES**

**Frontone beach**
A beautiful beach equipped with umbrellas and sunbeds, reachable on foot (15 minutes from the hotel) along a winding trail, but also via water taxi from Ponza port.

**Le Forna**
Le Forna is a village within the municipality of Ponza. It is the part of the island where you can enjoy a holiday, or even just a day, exclusively dedicated to relaxation. In fact, the most beautiful coves of the island are found in this area, which are accessible overland. Wonderful beaches and crystal clear seawater, all of which are dedicated to those who want to explore every corner of this island. It takes about 15 minutes by car to reach the beach from the Grand Hotel Chiaia di Luna, or you can take the bus or hire a scooter.

**The bay of natural pools**
One of the most popular destinations on the island, it is in the heart of Le Forna at the centre of Cala Feola and about 15 minutes from the Grand Hotel Chiaia di Luna. It is a gorgeous bay sculpted by the sea and wind. Over time two shallow pools have been formed: the first is enclosed by rocks and joined to the second one by two natural arches.

Ponza is a fascinating island, characterised by simple but tasty cuisine featuring local produce from both the land and sea. Among the seafood specialities, high regard is given to the great yellowtail, swordfish, snapper and the renowned red prawns, which are caught at a depth of about 500 metres, and can be enjoyed either raw or cooked in various ways. Lentils stand out among the most characteristic dishes from the land – smaller than traditional lentils but with an unusual flavour – and the wild grass pea, which is a legume whose delicate flavour is reminiscent of the chickpea. As for its wines, Ponza has been known since antiquity for its flourishing viticulture, which began in the eighteenth century, when Charles of Bourbon colonised the island and gave local families (who moved from Ischia to Ponza) land in the Punta Fieno area – near the lighthouse on Monte Guardia – and also in the Giancos area. Here families cultivated Ischian grapevines: Biancolella, Forastera, Malvasia, Falanghina, Piediroso (Per’e Palummo), Guarnaccia, Aglianico. In Punta Fieno you can admire the vineyards excavated from tuff and enjoy a glass of good Biancolella or Malvasia Puntinata, which are transformed into the dry sparkling wine that characterises Pontine aperitifs.
ATTRACTIONS

Punta della Madonna and its cemetery
This area is named after the small Madonna della Salvezione (Our Lady of Salvation) chapel. In the Roman era these stacks formed part of the summer residence of Emperor Augustus. Over the centuries the promontory has remained a landmark for those who sailed to and from the island. Until the construction of the cemetery in the nineteenth century, the old chapel of the Madonna – whose entrance perhaps originally faced the sea – represented a symbol of augury to seamen, who offered up prayers of thanks to the Virgin Mary for their arrival at the port or to augur well as they left it behind them. Now the little church has become the religious heart of the cemetery, and the nearby lighthouse constructed in 1858 has assumed the function of landmark, and is still operating today. Ponza cemetery is certainly one of the most amazing works of cemetery architecture in the world. It stands right on the promontory of Punta della Madonna, or Madonna Point. The progressive enlargement of the cemetery culminated in its restoration in the late nineteenth century, and came to encompass a series of underground burial cavities – such as the Tricoli Sepulchre of 1837 – which in turn were exploited as soldiers' lodgings during clashes between British and French troops in the early 1800s. In fact, the artillery post known as Leopold Battalion was installed at the foot of Punta della Madonna, which was in turn almost completely erased by the recent restoration of the cemetery, whose development has encompassed the whole northern slope of Punta della Madonna. It’s still possible to admire the chapel within the cemetery today, albeit in a heavily altered state.

The Roman Cistern of Dragonara
The Cistern of Dragonara was an obscure and neglected place for many centuries. It has now been brought to light again and represents a great and fascinating piece of archaeological heritage. The use of cisterns for the collection of water is widespread throughout the Mediterranean basin and constitutes the simplest and most functional system for the conservation of water resources during periods of drought. On the islands, especially the volcanic ones such as the Pontine Isles which have limited water resources, cisterns are often the only system available that can guarantee the water needs of the population. The Roman cisterns of Ponza have recurring technical characteristics, a good example of which can be seen in the perfectly preserved original structure of the Cistern of Dragonara. Excavated from the island's tuff, they consist of a vaulted corridor, or in the case of Dragonara, a series of vaulted corridors, that intersect perpendicular naves. This excavation method forms a checkerboard of solids and voids that allows for the greatest volume for collection purposes, without having to construct supporting pillars. A series of open shafts on the vaults allowed for direct water withdrawal and permitted the chambers to be aired. The capacity of the cistern is about 2,000 cubic metres.

Natural arch
This must-see really is the symbol of Ponza! Approaching this natural arch by sea, and perhaps even crossing it with one of the boats from the "Barcaroli Ponzesi" cooperative, affords a unique spectacle.

Punta di Capo Bianco
Capo Bianco is located near the Chiaia di Luna beach and can be reached by sea. Having arrived this far by boat, you can't continue without having first dived in to explore the grotto that traverses the Punta, or point, completely. Donning flippers and goggles we leave the boat behind – it will pick us up on the other side – and the adventure begins. The entrance is wide enough to allow for easy entry, but just beyond, the the cavity enlarges and is illuminated thanks to an opening that filters light from above.

Punta della Guardia
Punta della Guardia is located south of Ponza. It is a spur of volcanic rock about 297 metres high, from which the stack that rises on the summit gets its name. The lighthouse stands on the peak of the promontory, and is ranked third in Italy in terms of power and illumination. Punta della Guardia can be reached both by sea on private boats or shuttle services from Ponza port (about 3 km) and overland.

Grotte di Pilato
The Grotte di Pilato (Pontius Pilates’ Grottos) are a series of grottos that form a subterranean and underwater complex from the Roman era, excavated from the rock of the Punta della Madonna promontory, east of the town of Ponza. The discovery of statues, terracotta oil lamps and an ancient tuff altar suggest that these grottos served as a habitable annex of the imperial villa that once dominated the promontory above.
ITINERARIES AND EXCURSIONS

Palmarola and Zannone
Excursions to the islands of Palmarola and Zannone reveal the diversity of the islands of the archipelago: Ponza and Palmarola are both volcanic, while Zannone is sedimentary. Zannone forms part of the Natural Park of Circeo and is deserted and wild. The trail across the island takes us from one side to the other in just over an hour.

Punta Fieno
Punta Fieno is situated north of Chiaia di Luna beach, and is favoured for the cultivation of grapevines. Ideal for those who love walking in the open air, Punta Fieno is covered by lush Mediterranean vegetation. Grapevines and private vineyards stand on terracing resulting from centuries of work, where, if you’re lucky, you may be invited to enjoy a glass of excellent Pontine wine.

Tour around the island
The tour around the island allows you to admire the various unique little bays. In a few hours you can enjoy the wonders of nature whose colours and scents transform according to the time of the year. The two small beaches of Sant’ Antonio and Santo Giancos are situated outside Porto and are very easy to reach. The tour also includes Baia di Frontone beach, the so-called "La foca" (seal) rock in the Punta Bianca inlet, the cove named Cala del Core, Lucia Rosa beach, Punta Capo Bianco with its grottos and Chiaia di Luna, the vast sandy beach surrounded by a wall of light-coloured rock, which the Grand Hotel Chiaia di Luna overlooks.
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES - TREKKING

To enthusiasts of outdoor activities we offer an alternative way to get to know the island, via several trails of varying difficulty through the Mediterranean scrub.

Naturalist and scenic itinerary to MONTE GUARDIA
Travel time return trip: 2 hours and 30 minutes
Difficulty: Easy
Light trekking towards Monte Guardia, the highest point of Ponza (280 m.a.s.l.), from where you can admire all the islands of the archipelago and the nearby coast. The scenery that opens onto the Faro della Guardia (lighthouse) and Palmarola Island is particularly evocative. The route is along a characteristic mule track immersed in the Mediterranean scrub. Local wine and produce tastings are available.

Archaeological itinerary of the ROMAN NECROPOLISES of BAGNOVECCHIO
Travel time return trip: about 1 hour and 30 minutes
Difficulty: medium
Trekking through the typical Mediterranean scrub to explore the marvellous Roman necropolises of Bagno Vecchio. The trail leading to Bagno Vecchio (Old Bath) offers evocative framed vistas of the southeast coast of the island. It is an actual path paved with partially disconnected trachyte blocks. Situated along the trail are the necropolises know as the Roman tombs of Bagno Vecchio, which still retain the original decorations.

Naturalist-scenic-enogastronomic itinerary to FIENO
Travel time return trip: about 3 hours
Difficulty: medium
The trail leading to Fieno offers picturesque framed vistas of the island and the beautiful Chiaia di Luna beach. It explores centuries-old terraces and ancient cellars (grottos) connected to the production of local wines. The route is of medium difficulty. Local wine and produce tastings are available.

Naturalist-scenic itinerary to FRONTONE
Travel time return trip: about 1 hour and 30 minutes
Difficulty: medium
The road, for the most part open to vehicles, can be reached by Tre Venti. The steep trail leads, via a series of hairpin turns, to the village of Frontone and offers numerous views of the port. The charming ethnographic museum “Conte Agostino” is situated along the route. Continuing, you can reach the small fort or the Roman fish market and the beach. You can take a dip and then return on the boats that carry out a shuttle service to the port (subject to the service operating).

Archaeological-naturalist-scenic itinerary to PUNTA INCENSO
Travel time return trip: about 1 hour and 30 minutes
Difficulty: medium
The trail can be reached from Cala Caparra. Along the way you encounter the ruins of a Cistercian monastery, and then the Punta Incenso plain, located at the far northern edge of the island. From here you can enjoy an amazing view of the islet of Gavi and the island of Zannone.

Trekking on the island of ZANNONE
Difficulty: medium
Following the track used by the Cistercian monks through a dense and ancient holly oak forest, you reach Monte Pellegrino (192 m.a.s.l.), the highest point of the island. The uninhabited island is populated by peculiar species of flora and fauna, including a colony of mouflon sheep. Going backwards from Monte Pellegrino you reach the now uninhabited custodial home, near which the extraordinary remains of the Cistercian monastery of Santo Spirito (Holy Spirit) stand. From here a breathtaking panorama over the islands of Ponza and Palmarola opens.

Trekking on the island of PALMAROLA
Faraglione di San Silverio (Stack of Saint Silverio) trail
Difficulty: medium
The climb leads to the top of the stack of Saint Silverio. This stack, which is named after the patron saint of Ponza island, is characterised by a small niche with an effigy of the saint, which has been placed on the peak of the rocky spur. It is a destination for devout Pontine people, but also for many tourists. The story that bit by bit is becoming a legend, narrates that the Holy Pope underwent martyrdom here.

For information on places to see, activities to do and nightspots to discover, please contact us!