



THE PEARL OF SALENTO MIRRORED IN THE BLUE IONIAN SEA

GALLIPOLI THE BEAUTIFUL TOWN

Gallipoli, one of the most important resorts of Salento, is enhancing more and more its tourist facilities, but at the same time it is abundant in history and traditions. All you have to do is spend a few days at Gallipoli to discover and appreciate its beauty.

GALLIPOLI HISTORY

The town of Gallipoli, whose name derives from the Greek "kale polis" (beautiful town), is considered the "pearl of Salento". It is mirrored in the blue Ionian Sea, on the Western coast of the peninsula of Salento. Thanks to the presence of the harbour, it has developed a commercial activity ever since Roman times when, after the battles against Taranto and Cartagine, it became a "statio militaris" and a "municipium". The Via Traiana, connecting the town with Brindisi and Otranto, increased its trade activities with the Far East. Afterwards Gallipoli was ruled by the Byzantines up to 1071, when it was conquered by the Normans. It has been a Bishop's see since 551. Around

the year 915 it was assaulted by the Saracens, whose domination lasted for thirty years. However only after the Aragonese domination did Gallipoli begin to expand economically, also thanks to the constant growth of its maritime traffic. After the Unification of Italy, Gallipoli became a chief town together with Lecce and Taranto.

THE TOWN IS CHARACTERISTICALLY DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS: THE OLD TOWN AND THE MODERN TOWN

THE OLD TOWN

The "historical centre", rich in ancient buildings ///, rises on a small limestone island linked to the mainland by a stone bridge with twelve arches, built from 1601 to 1608. /// Over time, the bridge has undergone various alterations such as the removal of the wooden drawbridge, that was at its end, and the establishment of a parallel road, crossed by the railway and by a lane for cars, to connect the harbour with the mainland. Between 1483 and 1528 the massive city walls were erected to defend the town against attacks; in 1879 the upper part of the walls was removed. Now, along the panoramic road that surrounds the whole island, you can enjoy enchanting views.

From here you can join, through winding and narrow lanes, the interesting historical centre and admire one of the most significant churches for the population of Gallipoli, from both a religious and artistic point of view: the Cathedral of Sant'Agata, built in the 17th century.

It rises along Via Antonietta de Pace, the main street of the historical centre, and has a façade built of local "carparo" stone.

Another remarkable monument is the Castle, erected by the Normans and altered by the Angevins, on Francesco di Giorgio Martini's design. It is almost completely surrounded by the sea and rises close to the bridge connecting the old town and the modern town. The building, that underwent various alterations, has a square layout with four towers at its corners.

In the 16th century the fifth tower, the Rivellino, was built; circular in shape, lower and larger than the others and detached from the city walls, it used to be the main defence of the town.

THE MODERN TOWN

THE "BORGO NUOVO"

Crossing the bridge, nearby the harbour, you can admire the Greek Fountain adorned with two fronts.

It is placed nearby the bridge that links the mainland to the island, in front of the Church of S. Maria del Canneto and, more than a witness of the Greek presence at Gallipoli, it seems to date back to the 16th century. The main front is adorned with bas-reliefs representing scenes of metamorphoses, the tympanum hosts the town's and the Spanish Royal Family's coats of arms.

From here you can enter the "borgo nuovo", passing through Corso Roma that divides the place into two areas called "scirocco" and "tramontana". The complex of the "borgo nuovo" appears totally different from the "old town", with various shops and tourist facilities for hosting the numerous people visiting it in Summertime. In fact, in the last years, Gallipoli has become one of the most flourishing towns in Salento and a very desirable tourist destination for its enchanting landscapes and the picturesque scenery, such as the harbour that has even hosted the "Premio Barocco della Città di Gallipoli", a nationwide important event.

THE TWO HARBOURS

THE FISHING HARBOUR

Gallipoli has two harbours: the Ancient Fishing Harbour, located near the Greek Fountain and close to the Rivellino, and the Mercantile Harbour that skirts part of the old town.

The Fishing Harbour extends for 50 metres and is used to mooring the smacks sailed by the fishermen all the year round.

Their catches are sold at the local Market. On the quay of this harbour there is a small ancient church dedicated to Santa Cristina, the Patron Saint of Gallipoli, whose feast is celebrated from 23rd to 25th July.

This is the most important event both religious and civil held in Summer and consists of a procession with the Saint statue carried aboard the smacks at first and then along the town streets.

The day after, there is the traditional band concert inside a theatre and, at night, fireworks in the harbour. A traditional evening market, richly floodlighted, is also set in main street of the town.

THE MERCANTILE HARBOUR

The Mercantile Harbour has an extension of 80,000 sqm. Entirely restored by the Venetians in 1480, it was then occupied by the Aragonese who developed the trade of oil and wine.

Thanks to further structural improvements, it has become an important tourist call of Salento and, besides being the favourite mooring place of various tourists and famous personalities' sailing boats, it has also become the usual venue for concerts, events and folk festivals.

In fact the inhabitants of Gallipoli have a big passion for celebrations, that they have handed down from father to son, giving a folkloristic feature to this picturesque coastal town.

EVENTS AND FOLK FESTIVALS

At Gallipoli people try to escape from the troubles and the humdrum of the daily routine with the lights, the colours and the music of the feasts that are used to livening up the town life. Events and celebrations take place all the year round.

On the New Year's Day, a puppet - well dressed and symbolising the past year - is burnt and, on 17th January, the town is lit by the bonfires that celebrate the beginning of Carnival time.

The bonfire flames, "focareddhe" for the inhabitants, are dedicated to Sant'Antonio Abate also called "Sant'Antoni te lu focu" who, as per legend, went down to Hell for catching the fire to bring it to men, reminding us of the Greek myth of Prometheus.

When Summer is approaching, Gallipoli decks itself out for hosting both the new and the devoted tourists. This is the best time for visiting Gallipoli and seizing the various opportunities for amusement it offers, such as swimming and sunbathing on the beach, folk festivals and night entertainment at the discos and at the bars situated on the beach.

September is the time for Sunday walks, not only for the visitors but for the inhabitants too.

You can enjoy the warm weather and have lunch or dinner on the panoramic terraces of the restaurants standing by the seaside, or simply relax by walking along Corso Roma up to the lungomare (seafront) Galilei, to admire the interesting varied ways of fishing while the lampare (fishing lights) light up the sea water.

Gallipoli is a multifarious and at the same time a harmonious whole formed of religion and paganism, music and architecture, the sun and the sea.

As usual in Italian traditions, also Gallipoli can boast a healthy and tasty cuisine, offering mainly various dishes with fish.

GALLIPOLI: BEACH

La spiaggia storica di Gallipoli è quella del Seno della Purità, nel borgo antico: si tratta di un piccolo lido sab "Seno della Purità" is the most renowned beach of Gallipoli, in the ancient town: it is a small sandy lido formed by the water surrounding the medieval walls. In front of it there is the lighthouse of Island Sant'Andrea. During the 60s, also the beaches lying to the south of the town, behind the rocks going from the Fishing Port to the ancient sighting tower of San Giovanni della Pedata, have become famous.

In fact the coasts of Gallipoli, usually low and sandy, are considered to be the best lidos of this area of Salento.

The Lido, established in the 60s, attracting lots of tourists as well as the Baia Verde, with sand dunes, in the past covered with a dense Mediterranean scrub, are now very lovely beaches.

Not to be missed Punta Suina, 2 km from Gallipoli, a real Paradise for sea lovers!

Cuisine

The typical dish of the cuisine of Gallipoli is the "scapece", especially cooked during the folk festivals and easily found on the stalls and in the markets.

In the past it was a quite poor dish, mainly eaten by the population, but now it is included in the menu of the local restaurants.

It consists of small fried fish called "pupiddhi" (a word that means small), pickled among beds of soft parts of bread soaked with vinegar and saffron, that give the dish its characteristic colour.

Another typical dish is "lu purpu alla pignata", the octopus boiled in an earthen vessel called "pignata".

Today Gallipoli has become one of the most important resorts in Salento, enhancing more and more its tourist facilities but at the same time overflowing with history and the traditions of its population. All you have to do is spend a few days at Gallipoli to discover and appreciate its beauty.

Getting to Gallipoli

By car: A14 Motorway exit Bari North; Main Road Brindisi-Lecce; Western Ring Road exit 13B - SS 101 Gallipoli.

By train: FS to Lecce and the South-East Railway to Gallipoli.

By plane: Brindisi Papola Casale. Shuttle or Bus connection.

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