



THE SPAS: TOTAL WELLNESS IN THE ITALIAN TRADITION

L'ISOLA DI ISCHIA

THERMAL BATHS AND WELLNESS

Ischia, the largest island in the Gulf of Napoli, originated from a series of eruptions following one another over the centuries. Thanks to its volcanic origins, it is rich in mineral and thermal springs that have promoted the development of the spas scattered all over the island.

THE ISLAND: ITS GEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL ORIGINS

Ischia is an island of totally volcanic origin. According to the Greek myth, the rebel giant Tifeo was condemned by Jupiter to stay under the island of Pithecusae (Pithekoussai in the Greek language), now the modern Ischia, from where he erupts flames and hot waters and causes earthquakes every time he moves.

At Ischia, like in every place that has undergone recent volcanic phenomena, volcanism has considerably affected the settlement of man.

Towards the end of 700 BC, the Greeks established in the island and founded the village of Pithecusae, the same

name given to the island itself. Then, in 474 BC, the place was occupied by the tyrant Ierone with the aim of controlling the defeated enemies.

In 82 BC, Ischia was separated from Napoli and ruled by the Romans, but Augusto, aware of its volcanic risks, gave back the island (at that time called Aenaria) to Napoli in exchange for Capri.

At the end of the 4th century AD, the island was devastated by the Barbarian invasions, as happened also to the other islands of the Gulf of Napoli.

In 813 Ischia was conquered by the Saracens, who sheltered there until it was freed by the Sorrentini, and in 1228 it underwent a terrible earthquake that caused the deaths of 700 inhabitants.

The island flourished under the Angevins and the Aragonese; then the Castle, a cultural centre that had hosted all the geniuses of the Renaissance, went into decay because of the plague and the earthquakes.

In 1800 an economical developing program, organised by the Borboni, established the harbour, but only in the middle of the 20th century did Ischia start to develop to the extent that it became the tourist thermal resort now admired all over the world. Created by various volcanic eruptions that have gifted it with the characteristic mineral and thermal springs, the largest island in the Gulf of Napoli is also the most renowned hydro-thermal-climatic marina in the world. Its 50,000 inhabitants, called Ischitani, are spread over six communes: Ischia, Casamicciola Terme, Lacco Ameno, Forio, Serrara Fontana and Barano d'Ischia.

The mild winter climate, the hydrothermal resources, the beauties of nature, the scent of rosemary and lavender in the air, make the island one of the favourite destinations for tourists from all over the world, as well as the variety of its landscape, featured by mountains, isolated hills, promontories, slopes and green plains mirrored in the clear sea water. It is granted with such a particular charm that many people have established their second residence just here. The commune of Ischia divides into two main areas: the Porto (Harbour) area and the Ponte (bridge) area. Ischia Porto, in the past known as "Villa dei Bagni", is set in a volcanic crater and is shaped like a shell. It represents the commercial seat of the island as well as a splendid holiday resort rich in accommodation facilities, boutiques and the whitest beaches. In Antica Reggia Square you can visit the former Borboni's Palazzo Reale and the ancient Terme Comunali dating back to 1845. Ischia Ponte, once called "Borgo del Celso" thanks to the plants that used to feature its landscape, is the historical centre of the island. The first inhabited centre of the Commune, it was named after the wooden bridge that, until 1700, used to connect the ancient fishing village with the Castello Aragonese.

THE VILLAGES

ISCHIA

Ischia, the main commune of the island, has about 16,000 inhabitants. Situated on the North-western coast, it extends from the hills of Sant'Alessandro to the Castello Aragonese.

BARANO D'ISCHIA

Famous for the springs of Olmitello and Nitrodi, Barano lies in the South-western side of the island, in mountain territory, where you can breathe fresh and pure air and enjoy spectacular views.

LACCO AMENO

Lacco Ameno stretches along the coast up to the first slopes of Mount Epomeo, in the North-western side of the island.

Even if it is the smallest commune in the island, it is largely frequented for its Rizzoli spa and for the waters of Legne, Capitello and Santa Restituata as well as for the "stufa vaporosa" of San Lorenzo.

CASAMICCIOLA TERME

Thanks to the wealth of its spring waters, in 1956 the commune of Casamicciola has added Terme to its original name.

Well known since 1800 and frequented by eminent historical personages, Casamicciola Terme is rich in such pure and salutary waters as to be considered the best village spa on the island.

SERRARA FONTANA

Serra Fontana extends from the peak of Mount Epomeo (789m a.s.l.) to the sea. The commune consists of seven small inhabited centres that look totally diverse from the other part of the island and preserve various evidences of the "Ischitana" country life.

FORIO

Located in the western side, Forio is the second commune of the island as far as population and importance are concerned. Featured by its terraced vineyards, it produces 60% of the island's wine. The spectacular beaches of Citara and Cava dell'Isola are renowned as the most beautiful of the region.

THE CASTELLO ARAGONESE

The most ancient and characteristic castle in all of Italy, it tells us about the real history of Isola di Ischia. Built at 115m of altitude, it was used as a defence against the enemies as well as a quiet residence in time of peace. Erected on a rock in the sea called "Ischia Minore", in the 15th century AD it was connected with the mainland by a wooden bridge, now rebuilt in stone.

You can reach the castle by lift or on foot along a mule track running inside a gallery in the rock. Up on the rock, you can visit the Chiesa dell'Immacolata, the Convento delle Clarisse, the Cattedrale dell'Assunta, the Chiesa di S.Pietro a Pataniello, the Sentiero del Sole, the Chiesa di Santa Maria delle Grazie and the panoramic terrace of the olive trees.

Uninhabited since the beginning of 1800, the ancient fortress is now open to visitors.

Tourist information:

Castello Aragonese of Ischia

Via Pontile Aragonese

80077 Ischia (NA)

Tel. 081 992834

Open every day

from 9.00 am to 7.30 pm.

THE SPA

The thermal cures of Ischia was first mentioned in the Homer's Iliad. Even if the Greeks discovered the properties of these waters, the cures only became famous during the Imperial Roman period, also thanks to the naturalist Pliny that wrote about their benefits. Noble families from all over Europe, as well as many renowned personages, among whom one was Giuseppe Garibaldi, have visited Ischia to experience its treatments.

Now Ischia is one of the main thermal resorts in Europe: it can boast 69 "fumarolic" fields and 29 hydrothermal basins, from which 103 springs gush out. The springs divide into: mineral, warm, hot, thermal and hyperthermal.

The precipitations resulting from the weather are collected into big natural subterranean reservoirs and are heated by sources of warmth present in the underground.

The waters turn into vapour and come out to the surface. The different composition of the thermal waters depends on the different nature of the land and the water temperature varies between 15° to 85°C.

The thermal cures are now recognized as real medical therapies and are properly used for rheumatic conditions, rehabilitative treatments, for ear, nose and throat complaints, dermatology and general medicine. The thermal therapies can be combined with mud (clay of volcanic origin) therapies, such as baths, showers, natural saunas and Turkish baths, inhaling therapies and physiotherapies. People who are not interested in thermal cures, can avail themselves of the parks and gardens scattered all over the island, rich in swimming pools with water of various temperatures, hydro-massages, saunas, cascades, beauty centres, bars and restaurants.

THE BEACHES

Isola di Ischia boasts 35 km of a varied coast. Long sandy beaches alternate with steep volcanic cliffs as wild areas border well-equipped lidos which have to be paid for. Some beaches can be easily reached on foot, some others only by boat. At Ischia Porto the beaches are managed by the local hotels. Among the most beautiful beaches, we would mention the characteristic bay of Sorgeto, Ischia Lido, the beach of San Pancrazio, the beach of the "Scarrupata", the one of the Pescatori and the beach of Cartaromana, with the splendid view of the Castello Aragonese. Famous also is the beach of the English, from which you can admire the local fishermen throwing their nets. There is also the beach of the Maronti, 3 km-long, one of the most enchanting ones in Italy. It is characterized by subterranean caves with the most powerful thermal spring of the island: the Spring of the Cava Scura. Sheltered by an impressive range of hills, it is the ideal beach for those who like practising sport. The beach of the Maronti is connected to Sant'Angelo, a part of the commune of Serrara Fontana, by a small lane crossing a promontory.

TRADITIONS AND EVENTS

At Ischia every opportunity can be seized for celebrations, also enlivened by popular dances originated by ancient rivalries between districts. The most folkloristic ones are the "Vattut 'e l'asteche" and the "n'drezzata", an ancient dance with weapons.

Very attractive are also the local feasts, among which we would mention the Feast of Santa Restituita,

taking place from the 16th to the 18th May with the procession and fireworks; the Feast of Sant'Anna, celebrated on 26th July with an allegorical parade of boats, followed by the fire of the Castello Aragonese; the Feast of Sant'Alessandro of 26th August featuring a parade of historical costumes running from the Castello Aragonese up to the village of Sant'Alessandro; the Feast of San Giovan Giuseppe della Croce taking place in September at Ischia Ponte, and the Feast of San Michele Arcangelo of 29th October.

Cousine

A country of the Mediterranean diet, Campania provides genuine and simple flavours, the fruit of its fertile land and the abundant fish of its sea. Of course the star of the local dishes is the pizza, famous worldwide. Every menu offers spaghetti with fresh clams, pasta with beans and clams or the appreciated "gnocchi alla sorrentina". A speciality of Isola d'Ischia is the "coniglio all'Ischitana" served along with local vegetables such as tomatoes, garden rocket, aubergines and basil. Already well-known everywhere also the tasty "babà", the "sfogliatelle" and the "pastiera", to be complemented with a drop of "limoncello" and "nocillo".

Getting to Ischia

By car: A1 Motorway exit Napoli (South Caserta), then follow the ring road getting to Pozzuoli up to the exit of Via Campana. Go on towards the Harbour.

By train: Stazione Centrale - Piazza Garibaldi and Napoli Mergellina Station.
Taxi and bus connections with the harbour, Molo Beverello.

By plane: Napoli Capodichino Airport. Taxi and bus connections with Molo Beverello (hydrofoils and ferries).

By hydrofoil / ferry: from the harbour of Napoli, Molo Beverello.

PROMOZIONE TURISTICA

Via Nuova Cartaromana, 125
80077 Ischia (NA)
Tel. 081 38830899
E-mail: info@prontoischia.com
www.prontoischia.com

ASSOCIAZIONE TERMALISTI

Via Fasolara, 49
80077 Ischia (NA)
Tel. 081 993466
E-mail: info@termalisti.it
www.termalisti.it

FEDERALBERGHI ISCHIA

Via Fasolara, 49/B
80077 Ischia (NA)
Tel. 081 5074022
E-mail: info@ischiahotels.it
www.ischiahotels.it