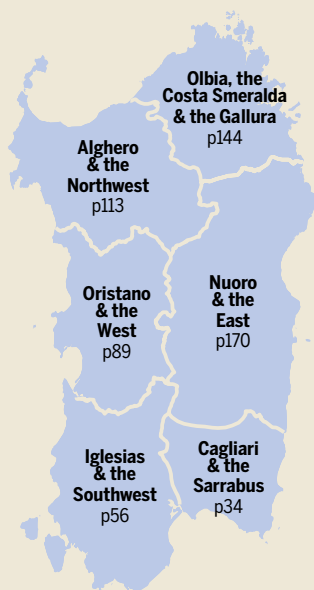




Sardinia



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

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Itineraries



10
DAYS

Essential Sardinia

This best-of-the-best itinerary brings together island's most seductive coastlines, culture and flavours in one easy route.

Warm up with two days in Spanish-style, sea-splashed **Alghero**, unravelling the old town and ramparts, then hop in a boat to head to the cathedral-like **Grotta di Nettuno**.

On day three, wend your way east, pausing for a slice of laid-back village life in alley-woven **Tempio Pausania** and forays into prehistory at the nuraghic sites around **Arzachena**. Wake up to the blissful silence at a rural *agriturismo* (farm-stay accommodation) in Gallura's granite mountains, then spend a couple of days lounging on blissfully secluded coves on the **Costa Smeralda**, the emerald waters of which live up to the hype.

Day six takes you further south, with a picnic break at the utterly sublime **Cala Brandinchi**, then on to the magnificent arc of the **Golfo di Orosei**. Base yourself in **Cala Gonone** and strike out on foot or by car to dramatic, cliff-backed bays, archaeological sites and the immense **Gola Su Gorropu** canyon. Then on day nine, swing south through the mountains of the **Sarrabus** to capital **Cagliari**. Devote your final day to must-see museums and strolls in the hilltop Castello district, and Marina dining.

7
DAYS

West Coast

A tour of the lesser-known west coast reveals some of Sardinia's most remarkable *nuraghe* and off-the-radar beaches.

Warm up with a day lazing on the white-sand beaches of the **Costa del Sud**, or hop across to the ravishing **Isola di San Pietro** for coastal walks and a lunch of freshly caught tuna. Head north via Sardinia's mining heart, **Iglesias**, to spend a couple of days on the **Costa Verde** and its gloriously deserted beaches – barefoot dune hiking at **Spiaggia della Piscinas** is a must.

On day four, detour to the hinterland to admire the prehistoric marvel that is the Unesco-listed **Nuraghe Su Nuraxi** and glimpse wild horses on the lonesome **La Giara di Gesturi** plateau. Push north on the following day to discover **Oristano** and the Phoenician ruins at **Tharros**, a short hop away on the wild **Sinis Peninsula**.

Day six takes you up to pastel-coloured, alley-woven **Bosa** and its crowning-glory castle, then on a dramatic coastal drive to **Alghero** in time for dinner on the sea walls. Wind out your trip on the silky sands of **Spiaggia della Pelosa** or spotting albino donkeys on the serene **Isola dell'Asinara**.

7
DAYS

Sardinia's South

The perfect mix of culture and coast, this south-coast tour contrasts the buzz of the capital with the calm of the mountains and beaches that spread east and west.

Kick off with two days in soulful **Cagliari**, wandering the steep, winding lanes of the medieval Il Castello district and lounging on **Poetto Beach**. Besides checking off trophy sights like the Pisan towers and Museo Archeologico Nazionale, allow time simply to stroll its cafe-rimmed piazzas and boutique-lined lanes.

Day three whisks you on a serpentine coastal drive east, with broad sea and mountain views and pretty coves on every corner. Tiptoe off the map for a spell in the lushly forested heights of **Monte dei Sete Fratelli**. On day four, dive into the iridescent water of the **Capo Carbonara** marine reserve, or simply bliss out on the **Costa Rei's** flour white beaches.

Spend your last few days swinging west of Cagliari, taking in the Phoenician ruins of **Nora** before more chilled time on the pine-flanked coves of the **Costa del Sud** – **Chia** is the go-to beach for windsurfing, flamingo-spotting and dune walking.

7
DAYS

Sardinia's North

With a week on your hands, you can tick off some of the island's most alluring towns and silky white beaches in Sardinia's north.

Begin with invigorating sea views and piazza life in **Alghero**. Day-trip to the dramatic cliffs of **Capo Caccia**. On day three, meander north to isolated **Stintino** and dreamy **Spiaggia della Pelosa**. Or visit the wild **Parco Nazionale dell'Asinara**, home to miniature *asini bianchi* (albino donkeys). Make time for university city **Sassari** on day four, before heading east to tour the Pisan-Romanesque churches of the **Logudoro Valley** and learn about the neolithic treasures of **Ozieri**. Continue your drive northeast on the SS127 to the quaint hill town of **Tempio Pausania**, deep in cork forests, then on to the otherworldly, boulder-strewn **Valle della Luna**.

Explore the *nuraghi* around **Arzachena**, or go island-hopping around the pristine **Parco Nazionale dell'Arcipelago di La Maddalena**. Spend your last day or two on the **Costa Smeralda**, mingling with celebs in **Porto Cervo**, and beach-hopping along its cove-laced coastline to gorgeously secluded bays like **Spiaggia del Principe**.

7
DAYS

The Wild East

Be seduced by exhilarating landscapes on this route through the wild Parco Nazionale del Golfo di Orosei e del Gennargentu.

Get set in **Nuoro**, capital of the rugged Barbagia hill country, before hitting the road for **Oliena** to taste its Cannonau wine. Swing east to **Dorgali** on days two and three, a fine base for visiting the **Grotta di Ispinigoli**, home to the world's second-tallest stalagmite, and the nuraghic village of **Serra Orrios**.

From Dorgali, it's a head-spinning drive down to the sweeping bay of **Cala Gonone**, where you can easily spend two days rock climbing, diving or exploring the **Golfo di Orosei** on foot or by kayak. Boat across aquamarine waters to sublime bays, such as **Cala Luna** and **Cala Mariolu**, and the sea cave **Grotta del Bue Marino**.

Packed your walking boots? Spend two days striking out into the wilderness. Hike to the nuraghic village **Tiscali**, and to the **Gola Su Gorropu**, a vast rock chasm. From the weird highland plateau of **Altopiano del Golgo**, further north, mule trails thread down to gorgeous **Cala Goloritzè**, thrashed by astonishingly blue waters.



Off the Beaten Track: Sardinia

VALLE DELLA LUNA

Perfect road-trip or bike-ride material, this tranquil valley swings north of Aggius. Weird granite boulders spill across rolling hills and farmland. (p168)

ARGENTIERA

Step back in time in Argentiera, a natural inlet about 11km north of Lago Baratz. It's now a ghost town overshadowed by the evocative ruins of its former silver mine. (p129)

LAGO DI LISCIA

Granite hills and woods of cork and oak rise up above this quiet lake, which makes a scenic splash on the landscape of Gallura. Rest below centuries-old olive trees. (p158)

SINIS PENINSULA

Escape to secluded bays and frost-white beaches, fringed by aquamarine water and cliffs cloaked in *macchia* (shrubbery) and wildflowers. A delight for surfing, windsurfing or doing nothing at all. (p96)

VALLE DI LANAUITTU

A kind of hush hangs over this lush valley, which makes a spectacular gash in the Supramonte range. Come here to trek or track down wondrous caves and prehistoric sites. (p180)



**SORGONO**

Deep in the remote, hilly Mandrolisai, Sorgono is surrounded by vast tracts of forest, archaeological sites, and vineyards that produce some of the island's best reds. (p185)

CARDEDU

Often overlooked in favour of Golfo di Orosei beaches further north, this wild and wonderfully undeveloped red granite coastline is a delight to discover on foot or by kayak. (p196)

MONTE DEI SETTE FRATELLI

Leave behind Cagliari's crowds and head to this park's quiet woodlands, granite peaks and waterfalls. (p53)

OASI DI SEU

A dirt track leads to this pristine nature reserve, close to Tharros. Saunter along serene trails through the aromatic Mediterranean scrub and enjoy expansive sea views. (p99)

SPIAGGIA DI PISCINAS

Tricky to get to but worth it, this gorgeous beach on the lonely Costa Verde is a broad ribbon of golden sand, towering dunes and windswept sea. Sheer bliss. (p66)

Mare di Sardegna

Lago Omodeo

SORSOGONO

Parco Nazionale del Golfo di Orosei e del Gennargentu

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SORSOGONO

Cala Gonone

Urzulei

Baunei

Santa Maria Navarrese

Arbatax

CARDEDU

SADALI

TERTENIA

MANDAS

VILLAPUTZU

MONTE DEI SETTE FRATELLI

CAGLIARI

CAGLIARI

CAGLIARI

CAGLIARI

Abbasanta

Riola Sardo

SINIS

PENINSULA SARDIA

OASI DI SEU

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OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Kerry Christiani

Coordinating Author, Cagliari & the Sarrabus, Olbia, the Costa Smeralda & the Gallura, Nuoro & the East Kerry's relationship with Sardinia began one post-graduation summer when, craving a little dolce vita, she embarked on a grand tour of Italy in a 1960s bubble caravan. She's been coming back ever since.

Witnessing the springtime eruption of wildflowers in the Supramonte, watching sombre Easter parades stream through Cagliari's Il Castelo district, hiking to

remote bays in the Golfo di Orosei and exploring the wave-lashed, red granite coastline of Cardedu were among her memorable moments researching this guide. An award-winning travel writer, Kerry has authored and coauthored some 20 guidebooks, including Lonely Planet's *Italy*. She lists her latest work at www.kerrychristiani.com. Kerry also wrote the Plan Your Trip and Understand sections.



Duncan Garwood

Iglesias & the Southwest, Oristano & the West, Alghero & the Northwest, The Coast Since first visiting Sardinia in 2008, Duncan has taken every opportunity to return to the island. He has covered it for several Lonely Planet guides, including the third edition of this book, and loves to explore its wild, untamed countryside and hidden nooks. An Italian-speaker, Duncan has worked on more than 25 Lonely Planet guidebooks and regularly writes on Italy for newspapers and

websites. Duncan also wrote the Sardinia Outdoors chapter and the Survival Guide section.

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