



Information about the mountain

Name of the mountain	Monti Lessini
Country	Italy
Region	Veneto
Altitude	From 700 to 1800 metres
Surface area	The area is about 820 km ²
Surface of protected area	The area of the Parc is about 10.400 ha
Name of local organization in charge of management	Parco Naturale Regionale della Lessinia
Number of municipalities	18
Institutional recognition	



Inclusion in Natura 2000 network: IT3210006 E it 3210040
National Register of Rural Landscapes of Historic Interest:
High pastures of Lessinia
Touring Club "Orange flag" - City of Soave

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Monti Lessini

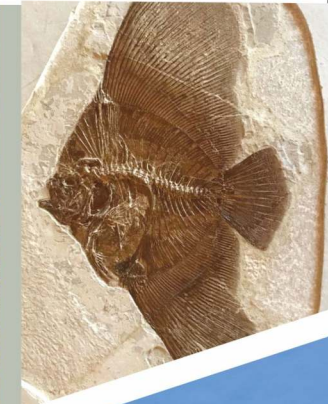
Monti Lessini: the "land of pastures".

**A perfect mix of nature, local food,
wine and traditions.**

Lessinia is a green paradise nestled between the Small Dolomites, the city of Verona and Monte Baldo. The territory appears as an almost magical landscape, made up of pastures and woods, where myths and legends intertwine with local customs and traditions. This territory also preserves numerous historical, architectural and folk art testimonies, in particular those of the Cimbri. Walking along the paths and mule tracks, crossing the districts, we can let ourselves be enveloped by the unique atmosphere of this environment and go back to the experience of the ancient inhabitants.



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Proud Local People

The inhabitants of the Lessini Mountains have a deep sense of belonging to the mountain and proudly keep traditions and customs alive. There is a common feeling and the belief that by keeping one's traditions alive, the territory can be safeguarded. An example is the "transhumance", which takes place twice a year, in spring with the migration of the cattle from the stables to the pastures rich in vegetation for food, and then in the autumn the return to the stables. A tradition that still involves all communities. Then there are also the "processions" which still remain a very important element of the religious customs of Lessinia. Last but not least, the heritage of the Cimbri is still evident in the local language, traditions and architecture.

Reputation

Lessinia is a plateau in the Pre-Alps, located mostly in the province of Verona and partially in those of Vicenza and Trento. A part of the Lessinia area constitutes the "Lessinia Regional Natural Park". Its peaks reach an altitude between 1500 and 1800 m above sea level. This area is renowned for its view, architecture, historical landmarks (including Ponte di Veja, the largest natural bridge in Europe) archaeology (with Fossil Museum and the Paleontological Park of Bolca) and natural environment, which includes beautiful paths for excursions, promoting slow tourism. This area contains many significant sites from World War One and the historical testimony of the "Cimbri" people, who moved here from Bavaria (Germany) in the 13th century.

Legends and Myths

In the legend of Lessinia, countless fantastic tales were told, with characters that were mainly made up of fade, anguane, ogres, basalisks, loi ...The "fade" are fascinating female beings, they wear superfine clothes in bright colours that contrast with the dark colours characteristic of the housewives of the past, for which they were jealous. They have no bodily consistency, but are just false appearances. Until the Sacro Consilio de Trento they lived together with humans and simplified their lives by teaching various tricks. Above all in eastern Lessinia there are legends of fantastic animal, like "basilisco" with the head, torso and legs of a rooster, snake tail and bat wings.

Power of Inspiration

With its natural and intriguing beauty, Lessinia was and still is a great inspiration for many art forms. Poets, painters, sculptors, photographers and architects are attracted by the natural characteristics and atmosphere of these places, fragile but powerful at the same time, where nature and history are an endless source of artistic meditation, introspection and creativity. With its incredible variety of panoramic views, mountain peaks, natural monuments, historical landmarks and more, it has attracted world famous artists like Dante Alighieri and Andrea Mantegna, who have been influenced by its charms.

Mediterranean Cultural Identity

The elements that mostly connect the Lessini and the Mediterranean Sea are both naturalistic and historical-architectural. Throughout the foothills there are typical Mediterranean plants such as vines and olive trees that make the area unique in its kind. From an architectural historical point of view the Lessinia has been occupied since the prehistory by populations, from the Palaeolithic populations in the caves, to the Venetian Republic, passing through the Romans and the medieval populations. The signs of these occupations can be seen today in the ancient villas scattered throughout the various municipalities.

Picturesque Landscape

Lessinia is characterized by a very intricate plateau where ancient pastures are still visible, furrowed by numerous canyons (in local dialect "vajo") with gentle grassy peaks which towards the north, due to the great tectonic fault, fall into deep valleys with fearsome rocky structures. This territory is fascinating in every season, and offers remarkable places to visit, some of which are known worldwide, like: Bolca, with its fossil museum of the Tertiary Era, ponte di Veja, a natural stone arch of about forty meters, the "Valley of the Sphinxes" where limestone monoliths have been shaped by time to resemble Egyptian sphinxes, the cave of Monte Capriolo, the Molina Waterfalls and many more.

Sustainability and Anthropogenic Environment

The Monti Lessini are a very large area of about 10.000 hectares. Human presence through time has left limited mark on the land, so its natural environment has been kept almost intact. The local economy focuses on breeding animals (mostly cattle and sheep), dairy production and the extraction and processing of red marble and Lessinia stone. In the last decades due to economical difficulties, Lessinia witnessed a rural exodus. Nowadays, in many areas, local communities are working as a network to re-discover the economical worth of slow tourism, therefore restructuring and reopening old paths, turning houses into B&B and more importantly, offering a quality experience to visitors and food and wine tourists.

Particular Ecosystem

From the flat foothills to its peaks, Lessini Mountains can be divided into three different landscape areas, each of which is recognizable for some natural and human aspects that characterize them. Furthermore, Lessinia have an extremely varied and interesting wildlife heritage. On the reliefs and valleys of the plateau, most of the typically Alpine species are well represented and some of these reach the southernmost limits of their Italian distribution ranges. In recent decades, thanks also to the establishment of the Protected Area, many species have had significant numerical increases and considerable territorial expansions.

Historic Places

Lessinia has been inhabited since the lower Palaeolithic, when its many caves were inhabited, used as shelter, and for other economic and security reasons. More complex structures were found, dating at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, known as the "castellieri" (huts located in a semicircle, fortified with stone walls). In the Roman Era most of the land was covered by woods, and only flatter areas were used as summer pastures. In time, Lessinia witnessed alternating times of growth and decrease of its population, due to economical reasons and hardness of life; nowadays many young couples are returning to experience the mountains.