Da Cagliari alla Costa Smeralda - 8 giorni

From Cagliari to Costa Smeralda - 8 days

**Day 1: Costa Smeralda - La Maddalena and Caprera** The Costa Smeralda is the coastal area of Gallura in the north-east of Sardinia, 55 km long.Arrival in Olbia and departure for Palau. Boarding on the ferry and short crossing to reach the island La Maddalena connected to the island of Caprera by a bridge. The Garibaldi Compendium is an area of the island which includes the places where Giuseppe Garibaldi lived the last years of his life, where he died and where his tomb is located. Today the site is used as a museum. Continue along the panoramic road to discover the wonderful views that overlook the smaller islands of the archipelago. After lunch, the afternoon is dedicated to visiting the Costa Smeralda with a stop in Porto Cervo for a lovely walk in the "Piazzetta delle Chiacchiere" known for its luxurious boutiques and the clubs frequented by the international jet set.In the evening arrival at the hotel, dinner and overnight.

The secret of the name: "Costa Smeralda" is not named because of its beautiful turquoise sea. There are many stories, among the most reliable it seems that the name comes from "Esmeralda", the daughter of the industrialist Giuseppe Mentasti who bought the island of Mortorio here. As Esmeralda was a very Spanish name, over time the name "Smeralda" was chosen and the Costa Smeralda was born from this wild and Mediterranean land.

**Day 2: Alghero** Breakfast and a full day dedicated to visiting Alghero, affectionately called "Barceloneta" by its inhabitants for the strong Catalan imprint that distinguishes it. Capo Caccia, a limestone massif with sheer cliffs overlooking the sea that hides beautiful caves including those of Neptune, reachable by sea or by land with the breathtaking Escala del Cabirol (the roe deer staircase). Built in 1954 to provide access to the Caves of Neptune, which until then were only accessible by sea. It is a marvel carved into the rock consisting of 656 steps that descend to the sea. The route is not tiring, enlivened by the blue sea and the green vegetation. The entrance to the staircase is free.Lunch in a restaurant. In the evening return to the hotel, dinner and overnight.

**Day 3: Castelsardo - Porto Torres** Breakfast at the hotel. Morning dedicated to the visit of Castelsardo, ancient medieval village clinging to a rocky spur overlooking the Gulf of Asinara and one of the most beautiful villages in Italy. In the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie there is an object of great veneration, the "Black Christ" (Lu Cristu Nieddu) of the 13th century, named so because its juniper wood has darkened over time. After lunch, visit of Porto Torres with the archaeological area, called The Palace of King Barbaro, the Romanesque Basilica of San Gavino, one of the most important and ancient monuments of Pisan forms of the island and the Torre del Porto. The name: Porto Torres would come from the association between the port of the time (the current port area known as the "ancient pier") with the Aragonese tower built in 1325. During the nineteenth century the name would change first in Portotorres and finally in the current Porto Torres (Port + Tower). In the evening return to the hotel, dinner and overnight.

**Day 4: Torralba – Tharros** Breakfast and departure for the archaeological site of Torralba (from "turris alba", or white tower), famous for the presence of numerous prehistoric and nuragic remains. Visit of its most important monument, the complex of the nuragic palace of Santu Antine. Continuation to Oristano. After lunch, visit to the Punic-Roman town of Tharros, on the Sinis peninsula. The area is currently an open-air museum and the excavations go on bringing to light more information about the past of this city. What you can see dates back mainly to the period of Roman domination or early Christianity. Among the most interesting structures are the Tophet, the baths, the temple foundations and a part of the area with houses and workshops. In the evening continue to Cagliari and arrival at the hotel. Dinner and overnight. **The Sardinian saying**: "e sa cittad'e Tharros, portant sa perda a carros", literally "from the city of Tharros you bring the carts and stones", as if to say that the nearby city of Aristiane, today Oristano, was built with the stones of the ancient Phoenician city.

**Day 5: Barumini – Gesturi** Breakfast and departure for the nuragic complex of Barumini, the most important archaeological site in Sardinia, the "Su Nuraxi", which dates back to the Bronze Age and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After lunch, visit of the Giara di Gesturi plateau, covered by Mediterranean scrub and famous for being the habitat of the last wild horses of Europe. The characteristics of the Giara horse are: almond-shaped eyes, long mane, short stature that varies at the withers from 120 cm and a weight ranging between 150 and 200 kg. In many specimens there is also a particular tuft that descends along the forehead almost hiding the eyes. The animal has adapted to the environment developing small and particular hoofs, perfect for stony ground. They live in the wild, with an average life expectancy between 15 and 20 years against the 40 of a normal horse. In Sardinian they are called cuaddedus or achettas. They live in packs of 4-6-8 females and 1 stallion. When the foals reach the fertile age of around 3 years, they are driven out of the herd by the stallion; therefore it is not rare to see small groups of 4/5 stallions looking for their own harem. In the evening return to the hotel. Dinner and overnight.

**Day 6: Cagliari – Nora** After breakfast, visit the city of Cagliari with its rich historical and artistic heritage: the old town, the medieval quarter with the majestic cathedral of Santa Maria, the Elephant Towers, San Pancrazio, the famous Roman amphitheater of the second century, the church of San Saturno, a beautiful example of Romanesque style and the Terrazza Umberto I, the most famous panoramic views of the city. After lunch, a visit to the Archaeological Park of Nora, which today represents the largest evidence of Roman times in Sardinia and which preserves a rich and original testimony of mosaics, among the most important on the island and characterized by the almost exclusive use of white, black and ocher colors. In the evening return to the hotel, dinner and overnight.

**Day 7: Sant'Antioco** After breakfast, full-day excursion to Sant'Antioco, an island rich in natural beauty, which preserves an immense archaeological heritage: menhirs of pre-Nuragic times, nuraghi, Phoenician-Punic necropolis, ruins of Roman times. Lunch in a restaurant. In the eveningreturn to the hotel, dinner and overnight.Making bread in Sant'Antioco is part of the local handicraft, a manual skill very common among the housewives of Antioch, who bake bread directly in their own wood-burning oven. The " coccoietti del santo" (also known as "pani pintau", the decorated bread) are famous, real jewels made with bread dough, which every year, on the occasion of the village feast, are taken in procession to the basilica as a donation in honor of Sant'Antioco Martyr.

**Day 8: Nuoro – Orgosolo** Breakfast and departure for Nuoro. Visit of the city and the Museum of the popular Sardinian arts and traditions.. Continuation to the city of the murals of Orgosolo and traditional lunch with the shepherds. Pecorino Sardo is one of the oldest cheeses in Sardinia, produced with sheep's milk. Has high therapeutic properties: it helps bone formation, improves immune functions, contributes to the reduction of fat mass, is antioxidant and prevents cardio-vascular diseases. The credit for all this is especially due to the spontaneous essences that are mainly fed to wild grazing sheep.In the evening arrival in Olbia and return back home.