

Cagliari city tour

Itinerary

Cagliari city sightseeing (1 hour)

- Panoramic sight from Monte Urpinu Park
- Poetto beach
- Molentargius-Saline Park and birdwatching (flamingos)
- Our Lady of Bonaria Basilica and Sanctuary

Cagliari medieval quarters (city center): (2 hours)

- Piazza Yenne
- Elephant Tower
- St. Mary's Cathedral
- Royal Palace
- St. Remy Rampart
- Marina quarter

Free time (1 hour)

Duration: 4 hours

Activity level: light/moderate

Description

Cagliari is an old city with a long history, Cagliari has seen the rule of several civilizations. Raised on more than seven hills its origins trace back to the ancient Phoenician Karalis, built over a settlement of the third millennium BC. In Roman times it became the “capital” of the island and from the Middle Age it has been the seat of long foreign dominations, whose traces are still visible especially in the district of Castello.

You start with a remarkable Cagliari tour taking in all the best sightseeing locations. *(bus, minibus or private car)

Once on the top of **Monte Urpinu Park** from viale Europa observation platform (100 meters above the sea), you enjoy **unequaled panoramic view**: Castello district with its fortified walls, Cagliari ponds, Golfo degli Angeli and the surrounding hinterland, as far as Sette Fratelli mountains.

Our tour continues to the **Poetto beach**: it is truly vast and closed off at one end by the **Sella del Diavolo (Devil's Saddle Headland)**. A legend has it that the particular shape of this limestone headland comes from an epic fight between angels and demons that took place in the skies over the **Gulf of Cagliari**. During the fight, Lucifer was unsaddled by his horse and lost his saddle, which fell on the land, giving it its particular shape.

It is the longest beach in Sardinia and the main coastal resort for the cagliaritani. It stretches for around 9 km. The sea can be blissfully crystal-clear when the much awaited north-westerly mistral wind is blowing.

Close to Poetto is **Molentargius Saline Nature Park** that includes the ancient salt mines (saline), whose use is certified by documents dating back to the Roman period, and the Molentargius pond itself, with its protected wildlife. Home to **flamingos** and other species of residential and migratory birds. With their pink plumage, long legs and necks, and strongly hooked bills, flamingos cannot be mistaken for any other type of bird.

At the end you discover **the basilica, the sanctuary and the convent of Our Lady of Bonaria** that are built on the hill south-east of the city centre. The initial church, which maintains its original Gothic architecture, was built after 1323 and it was then donated to the Order of Our Lady of Mercy, who then built a convent. In 1370, during a terrible storm in the gulf of Cagliari, a ship wrecked and part of its load, a large case containing a very fine **statue of Our Lady**, was found on the shore in front of the church. Both the statue and the case are on public display. The building of the adjacent basilica started in the 18th century and it was then resumed, but not finished until 1926. The complex is surrounded by a small but pleasant park, with nice views over the port.

Your walking tour begins by the quarter of "Castello" (Castle).

Discover the secrets of the medieval quarter among its strong walls, its impressive towers, its ancient churches, narrow streets and terraces.

- **Cathedral**

The church of St Mary became the city's cathedral in the 13th century. There are still traces of the medieval structure, the inside follows the Baroque fashion (18th century).

The Sanctuary of the Martyrs hosted in the crypt is home to 179 niches containing relics of Cagliari's martyrs.

- **Royal Palace**

The Royal Palace has existed since the 14th century as the residence of Aragonese, Spanish and then Savoy Viceroys. The present-day setting of the building is the result of major restoration works by Savoy engineers in the 18th-19th century.

- **Elephant Tower and St Pancras Tower**

Towers intended to guard the main entrances to Castello and to bolster the city walls, which were being built in the same period. Elephant Tower occupied the most south-western point of the castle, St. Pancras north-eastern. They are made from local limestone and their wooden floors divide them in four levels.

- **Saint Remy Rampart (Bastione di Saint Remy)**

It was built in white limestone at the end of the 19th century and it is the result of three fortified bastions which were then joined together. On the top, you are met by a vast terrace with benches and palm trees. The view is breath-taking.

Free time at Piazza Yenne for shopping or an Italian cappuccino.