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# PORT EXPLORER



## CALVI CORSICA

Corsica is a ruggedly beautiful and extremely mountainous island with hundreds of beaches, coves and inlets. Corsica is 100 miles long and 50 miles wide. Fifty miles to the east is Italy. Just across the water less than 10 miles to the south is the island of Sardinia. And barely 100 miles to the northwest is the Côte d'Azur and France itself.

Lovely little villages, popular with day-trippers and hikers, dot the interior of the island. These ancient towns were not built upon the mountain tops for aesthetic reasons. They were built there to provide protection from marauders, invaders and pirates. Corsica also has a few bustling cities. Calvi, located on the northwest coast, is among the island's largest cities. Its full time population is around 6,000. Bastia, 37 miles east of Calvi, is the island's commercial and tourist center and has a population around 45,000. The island's capital and largest city is Ajaccio. Forty-five miles south of Calvi and birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte, Ajaccio has a metropolitan population nearing 100,000.

Visitors to Calvi will find this a lovely town set along the coast of a stunningly picturesque island. Surrounded by towering mountains, rolling hills and pine forests, Calvi was established hundreds of years ago as a simple fishing village. The town was a busy and prosperous port during the days of the Roman Empire and again during the glory days of the Republic of Genoa (1100-1700s). Though it has grown, Calvi still clings to the water's edge. This charming port has a colorful marina and a long, beautiful beach. Here ancient history combines with all the shopping, dining, sightseeing and beach activities associated with a 20th century resort town. Today eager tourists have replaced invading armies.

Dominating the city skyline is the great Citadel. Constructed, expanded and restored since the 1200s, this fortress is the symbol and centerpiece of Calvi. In the early 20th century the people of Calvi were among the first in Corsica to see the benefits of attracting tourists. Having been a refuge for centuries the famous fort became a magnet, a reason to visit the town. The Citadel, as it has for hundreds of years, continues to serve the city well.

The people of Corsica, historically renowned for their bravery and fierce sense of independence are in fact as warm and inviting as the weather. Corsica sincerely welcomes visitors to "L'Île de Beauté", the Isle of Beauty.



### HISTORY

Corsica was inhabited as far back as the Pre-Neolithic Age, 6,000 BC. The earliest Corsicans wisely abandoned the coast and headed for the protection of inland hilltops and mountains. Their ancient longing for independence has never faded.

The Romans brought peace and prosperity which lasted for centuries. The Romans were followed to Corsica by the Ostrogoths and Vandals, Byzantines and Lombards. Repeated attacks by Muslim Saracen and Barbary Coast pirates only added to the chaos. So many pontiffs, potentates, kingdoms and countries swept over Corsica in the following centuries; by the time the French took the island in the mid-1500s Corsica had been nearly depopulated by invasion and disease.

But Corsicans are a strong and resilient people. Perhaps their character, courage and determination can best be exemplified by the fact that on May 15, 1768 the Treaty of Versailles officially gave the island to France. Shortly thereafter, August 15, 1769, in the coastal Corsican town of Ajaccio a young woman by the name of Maria Letizia Ramolino presented her husband Carlo Buonaparte with a son. They named him Napoléon and the fate of Corsica and the world changed forever.



## CALVI PLACES OF INTEREST

**1 Calvi Beach** is one among the many beautiful beaches of Corsica. The water is calm and shallow. The sand is clean and white. Lifeguards are on duty and there are plenty of water sports available. Numerous cafés and snack bars line the beach.

**2 The Citadel** (Ville-Haute) was originally built by the Genoese beginning in the mid 1200s. At the entrance to the Citadel visitors can still read the inscription “Civitas Calvis Semper Fidelis”. This is a 15th century testament of loyalty to the Republic of Genoa. The walled part of the city is one of the most popular sites in Calvi. The views from the ramparts are wonderful and a sense of living history is in the air.

**3 The Cathédrale St. Jean Baptiste** was originally built in the 1200s. It stands on the highest point of land within the walled citadel. Surrounded by old buildings the church looks out over the Place d’Armes.

**4 The Birthplace of Cristoforo Colombo** (Christopher Columbus) is also located within the citadel. Yes, history books say Columbus was born in Genoa in 1451. Many good people of Calvi feel that this is not true. It must be admitted, those who claim Columbus was born within the walls of the Calvi Citadel have made a very interesting case in support of their argument.

**5 The House of Laurent Giubega** was a secret place of refuge and hiding for a young French Captain and his family during tumultuous days in 1793. The hunted soldier, surly facing execution if captured, escaped Calvi and made it back to France. On December 2nd 1804, a little more than a decade after hiding in this house in Calvi, the soldier was crowned Napoleon I, Emperor of France.

**6 The Governor’s Palace** (Palais des Gouverneurs Ge’nois) dates to the 1400s. It was the long time residence of the leading representative of the Republic of Genoa. Today, known as Caserne Sampiero, the palace serves as

the Officer's Barracks for the Corsica based regiment of the Légion étrangère, the French Foreign Legion. The palace is also home to the Museum of Corsican Ethnography. This is a very interesting museum which traces the history of the island back over 6,000 years.

**7** The **Oratoire de la Confrérie St. Antoine** was built in the 1500s. This was home to a religious charitable institution. Though faded by time, visitors can admire the Italian frescoes which date back hundreds of years.

**8** **Ville Basse** (Lower Town) is the part of Calvi built at the base of the Citadel walls. The beautiful and popular waterfront promenade (Quay Landry) along the marina is lined with stores, boutiques, cafés and restaurants.

### Beyond Calvi

La **Balagne** is the countryside and coastal area around Calvi. Since Roman times it has often been referred to as the "Garden of Corsica". From the coast to the mountains, this is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful and scenically diverse regions to be found anywhere on the island.

### SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Calvi and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Order Form or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

### LOCAL CUSTOMS

**Bargaining:** Prices in stores and markets are often fixed but some owners may bargain. It never hurts to ask.

**Tipping:** A 10% tip is the custom, despite the fact there might be an automatic service charge on the bill.

### LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

The cuisine on Corsica is a wonderful combination of time honored island dishes influenced by French and Italian styles. In coastal villages sea food is fresh. In the mountain towns and villages a more rustic and traditional "home cooking" may be prevalent. There are many local products of incredible quality. This is primarily due to the small scale of farming and breeding of goats and sheep. Corsican pork (domesticated and wild), cheese, honey and wine are among a few of the delicious products found on the island. Though olive oil is not produced as much today as it was in centuries past the quality and taste of the local oil is greatly admired and appreciated. Some favorite local dishes are: Stufato is a steaming meat stew, usually lamb or goat, often served with fresh pasta. Pulentu is a hearty polenta made from the flour of island grown chestnuts. Aziminu is a popular fish soup or bouillabaisse. Coppa, Lonzu, Salumu and Prisuttu are among Corsica's famous dried pork products. Niolo, Brocciu and Brin d'amour are some of the island's most popular cheeses.

The first vineyards were planted on Corsica well over 2,000 years ago. The wines produced on the island are wonderful. Little from local vineyards is ever available for export. The

Muscat of Corsica is exceptional. Pietra Beer is locally produced and uses chestnut flour in the brewing process.

### SHOPPING

Calvi's waterfront is known La Marine. Small shops are found here and all along the narrow streets which lead from the harbor. Many shops and boutiques can be found along Rue Clemenceau, Calvi's main road.

### LOCAL CURRENCY

The unit of currency in France is the Euro. All Euro notes and coins are legal tender in all countries of the EU. Most stores in Calvi accept major credit cards. ATM's are usually available, especially in popular tourist areas. At smaller shops or cafés cash (Euros only) may be required.

### POST OFFICE

The Post Office (La Poste) is located on Boulevard Wilson.

### TOURIST INFORMATION

The Visitors Information Center (translation: Office de Tourisme) is located at Port de Plaisance.

### TRANSPORTATION

Taxis are available but Calvi is easily walked. Scooters and cars can be rented but keep in mind the roads outside of town are often a bit challenging. Guard-rails along mountain roads are "optional" and most road signs are in Corsican. There are a couple of trains which travel to and from Calvi. The routes are famously scenic. The "Red" train goes east about 10 miles to the lovely old resort town of Île Rousse. The "Blue & White" train goes about 35 miles east to Bastia, Corsica's commercial and tourist center.

### USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

The official language of Corsica is French. The language native to the island and still spoken throughout the mountain towns and villages is known "U Corsu". Together with its own vocabulary, U Corsu seems to combine Medieval Etruscans and Genoese. Once banned by the French government, today the language is taught in Corsica's schools and spoken by over 60% of the population.

*English - French*

Hello - Salut

Do you speak English? - Parlez-vous anglais?

Please - S'il vous plaît

Thank you - Merci

You're welcome - De rien

Good-bye - Au revoir

