

A Journey to the Sea of the Maremma: Stories, Waves and Memories

The day begins at Puntone di Scarlino, when the boat gently slips away from the moorings. The air smells of Mediterranean scrub and salt, and the Marina, elegant and quiet, almost seems to greet those who set off on a small journey through time. Few know that beneath these calm waters, which was once crowded with merchants and sailors, lies the memory of Portus Scabris, a vital hub of Roman trade. Today everything has changed, yet the ancient charm remains, like a faint voice arriving from the past.

A few minutes of navigation and Portiglioni appears, a small, almost shy harbor. Today it seems a peaceful corner, but in the past, it was alive with noise, men, ropes and carts. From the mountains came the pyrite from the Gavorrano mines, suspended on a long cableway that ended right here, where silence and wind now reign. It's fascinating to imagine how this place, now so tranquil, was once the beating heart of a hardworking world that no longer exists.

The coast becomes wilder, and Cala Martina appears. Its clear waters tell a story straight out of an adventure novel: Garibaldi's escape. It was September 2nd, 1849, when, hunted and wounded, he found here the courage and hope to sail toward freedom. Looking at the cove today, so serene, it seems impossible to picture the tension of those moments. Yet the sea remembers everything, and when the boat cuts through it, one almost hears a distant echo of oars and whispers voices.

Then comes Cala Violina, appearing suddenly like a promise fulfilled. Its sand, famous for the delicate sound it makes beneath one's feet, seems eager to tell a melody that belongs only to those who truly listen. The water is an almost unreal emerald green, and the soft outline of the hills protecting the cove turns every glance into a quiet thrill.

Continuing on, the coast grows silent, and Cala Civette appears, where an ancient tower watches the sea like a lone sentry surviving centuries of storms and battles. Torre Civette, built to defend these shores from pirates, is today a mysterious guardian of stone and wind. The cove, immersed in unspoiled nature, is an embrace of tranquility and history.

The headland shifts, and all at once the view opens onto Punta Ala. The first to welcome the boat is Cala del Barbiere, dominated by Torre Hidalgo. History here also speaks of dark sails on the horizon, of sightings and alarms: it was a strategic point

against incursions. Today it is instead a bright, quiet place where the sea plays with the rocks and time seems to have paused.

A little farther ahead, like a small guardian of the depths, rises the Isootto dello Sparviero, crowned by the Torre degli Appiani. Seen from the boat, the tower looks like a crown on a solitary rock, its silence telling centuries of resistance and abandonment. Its presence gives the area an almost magical aura.

And then the Port of Punta Ala appears, elegant and modern, born in the 1960s yet so harmoniously placed in the landscape that it seems natural. As one draws near, the sea reflects the boats like a painting, and everything smells of summer, wind and freedom.

Heading back toward the heart of the gulf, the eye embraces the wide curve of modern Follonica. The gulf, with its welcoming shape, resembles an amphitheater where the sea is the undisputed protagonist.

And when the horizon is clear, to the southwest rises the Island of Elba, majestic in its simplicity, with bluish mountains rising from the sea like an ancient dream. For centuries it supplied iron and wealth, and even today it guards stories of pirates, princes and revolutions.

Finally, turning one's gaze northward, Piombino appears — proud and silent — like a sentinel watching over the channel and the island. Its walls, towers and port remind everyone that these waters have been, and still are, a crossroads of people and destinies.

This journey is not just a boat trip: it is an encounter with memory, with the wind that carries distant stories, with the sea that preserves and reveals all things. It is the sincerest way to discover the Gulf of Follonica, letting yourself be guided by its waves and the tales living along every curve of the coast.