



Still waiting for this to be over so you can go somewhere? Here's a suggestion while you wait it out...

“It’s a white confection overlooking the impossibly blue Tyrrhenian Sea—and a soothing taste of la dolce vita.”

It’s a small village with plenty of Greek legends. The shiny white limestone is so bright it’s said to have guided Odysseus’s ship like a lighthouse.

Now, Sperlonga is all gleaming white houses, white walkways, white arches— with an occasional vivid color from green ivy or hot pink bougainvillea. There are beautiful beaches you can reach by curving stairs that lead you to the sparkling water with a sky overhead just as blue as the water.



White buildings...



...and plenty of flowers make for a lot of charm.

And underneath the town is an underground maze of grottos. In Latin, "spelunca" means cave or grotto and so the town was named Sperlonga for all the grottos it sits upon--and maybe a beautiful nymph as well.

Legend speaks of a beautiful nymph, Sperlonga, who lived among the grottos. The legend says that Jupiter fell madly in love with her and turned himself into a meteorite in order to be with her. He landed smack between her legs on the beach. Their night of passion created the high crags the village was later built on. This was thought to keep invasions to zero since it sits on Jupiter's high cliffs.



Wall paintings depicting an invasion

The pirate Red Beard, however, had no problem reaching the town. His plan was to kidnap the beautiful countess, Giulia Gonzaga, and take her back as a prize for the Sultan Suleiman. The plot failed as Giulia was too smart and escaped.

In 1622 history repeated itself and Sperlonga once again was razed to the ground by Turkish pirates. When it was rebuilt, it sported narrow streets and long winding stairways both designed to confuse invaders and to make it harder for the pirates to navigate.

It's about halfway between Rome and Naples, close enough to Rome that the Emperor Tiberius knew a good thing when he saw it and built a unique massive grotto villa. One of the grottos was the site of his many dinner parties. Tiberius used the residence until 26 BC. How did they get the date so precise? Well, it was the year when falling rocks from the cliffs crashed on the Emperor's diners during a grand feast in the villa! Tiberius was saved but many of his guests were killed. He hightailed it out of town and moved to Capri. Today the ruins of the villa are still standing and entice those who want a closer look.



*Ruins of the Villa of
Tiberus*

Inside the villa ruins

*A statue excavated from the
ruins: The Blinding of
Polyphemus*

In the 1950s and '60s you might have seen Brigitte Bardot, Marlene Dietrich, Andy Warhol, or Arthur Miller wandering the streets. Why would they choose this out of the way village to visit? Sperlonga is considered one of the most beautiful villages in Italy, that's why. There's not much to do other than go to the beach and back--and to eat. It's the Italian art of "il bel far niente," or, "the beauty of doing nothing." There are boat trips to the grottos and the beautiful crystal-clear water is perfect for swimming or snorkling.



Sperlonga is said to have some of the most beautiful beaches in Italy

So add this one to your list. They have plenty of lidos (beaches) so locate your Speedo (they rhyme!), find your passport, dust off your flip flops, and wait it out. You probably want to take a better peek, so here's a [video](#).

©2020 Lincoln Hills Italian Club | Lincoln Hills Italian Club

[Web Version](#)

[Preferences](#)

[Forward](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

Powered by
[GoDaddy Email Marketing](#)®