

Skiing And Winter Sports In Calabria

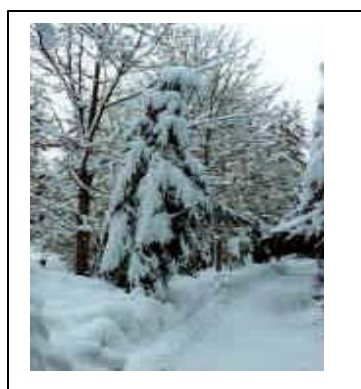
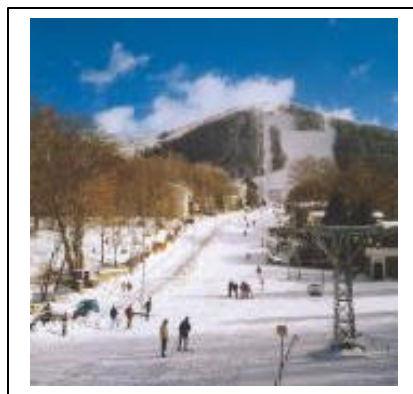
Owing to its natural beauties that are not restricted solely to the sea, but that also include its magnificent Apennines, Calabria is a preferred tourist destination not only during the summer, but also in the winter. It is a true paradise also for those who love to ski. The snow and cold weather sports offered here are infinite.

Everyone has the chance to always stay in shape by doing the always eternal - but that doesn't mean any less fun - sport of alpine skiing or cross-country skiing, and perhaps have the Laghi landscape as a backdrop, or discover newer and newer horizons. And here the Sila, the largest plateau in Europe, is a true godsend. Extreme sports and the latest novelties can be chosen here as well. One of these is surely telemark, even if it is actually just a rediscovery. In fact, it was the first downhill technique used with skis. It was invented in Norway, in the town of Telemark (from which it gets its name), and is distinguished by a wide kneeling curve. One ski surpasses the other (depending on the direction you have to curve in), and when the boot reaches the height of the point of the other ski, the knee goes down a little diagonally to control the curve. And it is no longer something new to see tourists testing their mettle in this new old technique coming down the many runs that the Calabrian district offers. But the real novelty of recent years is undoubtedly the snowboard, which has increasingly become popular especially with kids, even up to the point of shifting the market balances in the world of winter sports. History and legend are intertwined in the birth of this sport. Actually, it is said that the Alps were scored by some show-off precariously balanced on a wooden board at the start of the 1900s. Apart from the myth, the modern snowboard surely originated in the United States where, in around 1960, engineer Sherman Poppen made a prototype of a snowboard (snurfer) for his daughters' amusement. Snowboard, skateboard and surfing intertwine their histories thanks to the inventiveness of figures such as Jake Burton and Tom Sims. And so, the first races were organized at the onset of the 1980s in the Apennines as well, but they seemed really challenging. A lot of snow has fallen since then and many other competitions have been disputed, but the snowboard still preserves the characteristics it had when it was only a pioneering sport: freedom and imagination. And Calabria certainly offers the ideal setting for whoever wants to give vent to their freedom and indulge in imagination. For those who do not ski, there are always excursions in the snow-laden woods of the Sila, and "dog trekking" is fun and stimulating. You take long walks through the woods and valleys helped by a husky, trained if necessary, especially when going uphill and where the snow is high. A rope several meters long is tied to the dog. It goes without saying that the surrounding landscape is something unique and that one is strongly in contact with nature. For archery lovers, there is Ski arc. Here the cross-country skier aims at the target while drawing the bow in a series of shots along a route about ten kilometers long, to be covered on skis and while being "helped" by a dog. This type of sport, which originated in the Trentino region, today is catching on in Calabria and we are seeing a growing number of sports enthusiasts on our plateau. In addition to traditional ice skating, ice lovers are offered an odd and unusual game: Broomball, where the only equipment used is a broom and a ball. Skates are not used, but the players instead wear cloth shoes fitted out with lots of suction cups. The rink and rules are similar to those of its big brother, hockey. So, as you can see, all you need is a little enthusiasm and lots of willpower in order to have fun and spend a perfectly healthy winter. The tools, and above all the natural landscape that allows us to do it from October until May - a real rarity anywhere in Italy - are not lacking.

Surrounded by extensive greenery of pine and beech woods, Hotel Miramonti is located in the resort of Gambarie, typical mountain village of the Province of Reggio. The building has 42 ensuite rooms, decorated in rustic style, all with central heating/air-conditioning and TV. In addition it has TV room, a reading room, conference hall, bar, games room, discotheque, playground, large garden and car park with custodian. There are numerous activities organized by the animators: from dance evenings in the discotheque, to games and contests among the guests. The Hotel also organizes interesting outings to discover the natural beauties of Calabria, reserves a special welcome for groups and families. Winter sports enthusiasts can enjoy themselves on the 10 km of pistes reachable by the efficient ski-lifts, situated a few meters from the Hotel. In the large, welcoming restaurant, you can taste the best dishes of traditional Calabrian cookery. The mushroom and roast game dishes are exquisite, accompanied by fine wines. From October to December anyone who appreciates good food can enjoy the various local food festivals, such as the mushroom festival, the roast chestnut festival, or the St. Martin's Day Feast, that is organized every year at Gambarie. Hotel Miramonti, notable for its courtesy and hospitality, is capable of satisfying the most varied requirements, offering a relaxing and comfortable stay in an environment rich in stupendous natural scenery.

Villetta Mimma Vittoria is 1 hour distant from Gambarie and 2 ½ hours distant from La Sila

www.villettamimmavittoria.com



Sila is a vast highland which extends into the heart of Calabria, and reaches 1100-1700 metres: the most important relief is that of Mount Botte Donato whose peak reaches 1928 metres. To the north it borders the Sibari Plain and to the south that of Lamezia. On the Ionian side Sila slopes gently towards the sea, while on the Tyrrhenian side it precipitates towards the River Crati valley. Since the Romans, the highland, whose name comes from the Latin silva, has been known for its centuries old forests, for green pastures and for an abundance of water. Sila is subdivided into three areas: Sila Grande, the central and vastest area of the highland and the Greek area which includes many Albanian villages belong to the Province of Cosenza while Sila Piccola belongs to the territory of Catanzaro. Crossed by several rivers and torrents and enveloped by immense pine and beech forests alternating with hills and rich pastures, the area belonging to Cosenza includes Lakes Arvo and Cecita, the biggest on the Sila highlands. In 1968 Sila became part of the Calabria National Park, an ecosystem rich in interesting vegetation and animals. Near the Park there are interesting villages such as Camigliatello Silano and Lorica where good hotels can be found. The area is well-equipped for winter sports and in other periods of the year one can practice several activities or take walks along a set of purpose-built nature trails.