

ITALY

LONELY PLANET



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Viareggio (Lucca). A surfer zips up his wetsuit before heading out into the water. Among the few activities allowed under the emergency lockdown decrees is the practice of individual outdoor sports.



Viareggio (Lucca). Boris, aged 16, is a student.

The evolution of beach life in the time of Covid-19

For over a year now, many people have been experiencing a sensation something like finding oneself on a boat adrift on stormy seas. Physical distancing became social distancing, then also mental. Anxiety, irritability, apathy, fatigue, insomnia are just some of the symptoms of what has been termed "lockdown stress". A study by the University of Michigan claims that the best way to overcome this is by spending time in nature. In fact, it is precisely nature that many have sought, perhaps unconsciously: woods, mountains and, above all, the sea.

Thanks to our forced isolation we have rediscovered the forgotten value of connecting with nature's primary elements: the wind, the sun, the silence and the rhythmic lapping of the waves on the shore. And the feel of sand passing through our fingers, like an hourglass marking the passing of the weeks or months that lie ahead before we can return to what now seems like a bygone normality.



Bocca del Serchio (Pisa). Not far from the estuary of the Serchio River on the Tyrrhenian coast are makeshift beach shelters known locally as "straccali", which are constructed from driftwood. Built and used during the summer by families and groups of friends for hanging out on the beach and sheltering from the sun, they serve as isolated dens from which to enjoy nature. The structures are regularly destroyed by the authorities.



Viareggio (Lucca). The public beach area known as Lecciona inside the Migliarino-San Rossore Nature Reserve. A group of youngsters are socially distanced in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19.



Viareggio (Lucca). The mouth of the port. A young man walks alone at dusk alongside the so-called Muraglione, the sea wall.



Viareggio (Lucca). Riccardo, aged 52, has been the lifeguard and owner of the Della Spora beach club for more than thirty years. He has begun work to prepare the beach to welcome the season's first customers.



Viareggio (Lucca). At the public beach area known as Lecciona inside the Migliarino-San Rossore Nature Reserve are makeshift beach shelters known locally as "straccali", which are constructed from driftwood. Built and used during the summer by families and groups of friends for hanging out on the beach and sheltering from the sun, they serve as isolated dens from which to enjoy nature. The structures are regularly destroyed by the authorities.



Viareggio (Lucca). The historic entrance to La Salute beach club on the seafront.



Viareggio (Lucca). A group of children play on the seashore before the beginning of the season when the beach clubs are permitted to prepare the beach with umbrellas and sunbeds.



Viareggio (Lucca). A waitress at the Galliano bar, one of the most famous on the seafront, adopts all of the necessary anti-Covid precautions.



Bocca del Serchio (Pisa). Not far from the estuary of the Serchio River on the Tyrrhenian coast are makeshift beach shelters known locally as "straccali", which are constructed from driftwood. Built and used during the summer by families and groups of friends for hanging out on the beach and sheltering from the sun, they serve as isolated dens from which to enjoy nature. The structures are regularly destroyed by the authorities.



Viareggio (Lucca). At the public beach area called Lecciona inside the Migliarino-San Rossore Nature Reserve, a man relaxes with his dog in an area he has cordoned off with sticks in the sand in order to protect his personal space.



Viareggio (Lucca). The mouth of the port. A group of youngsters on the public beach alongside the Muraglione sea wall.



Viareggio (Lucca). A lifeguard keeps his anti-Covid mask on his elbow when he is not in the vicinity of other people.



Viareggio (Lucca). Samuele, aged 44, is the lifeguard at Tirreno beach club.



Viareggio (Lucca). A young woman walks along a path between the "camuciolo", in the area of the public beach called Lecciona. "Camuciolo" is the local name for *Helichrysum stoechas*, a wild plant that grows on the dunes.



Viareggio (Lucca). An aerial view of the Darsena beach. Sunshades and umbrellas, according to last summer's emergency decree, must be positioned in such a way as to ensure each one has 10 square metres of free space around it.



Viareggio (Lucca). Gloria, aged 26, walks on the shore.



Bocca del Serchio (Pisa). Not far from the estuary of the Serchio River on the Tyrrhenian coast are makeshift beach shelters known locally as "straccali", which are constructed from driftwood. Built and used during the summer by families and groups of friends for hanging out on the beach and sheltering from the sun, they serve as isolated dens from which to enjoy nature. The structures are regularly destroyed by the authorities.



Viareggio (Lucca). A young man looks for the right place to dive down to gather mussels from the submerged rocks.



Viareggio (Lucca). Samuele, aged 44, lifeguard at the Tirreno beach club, has just finished raking the sand.



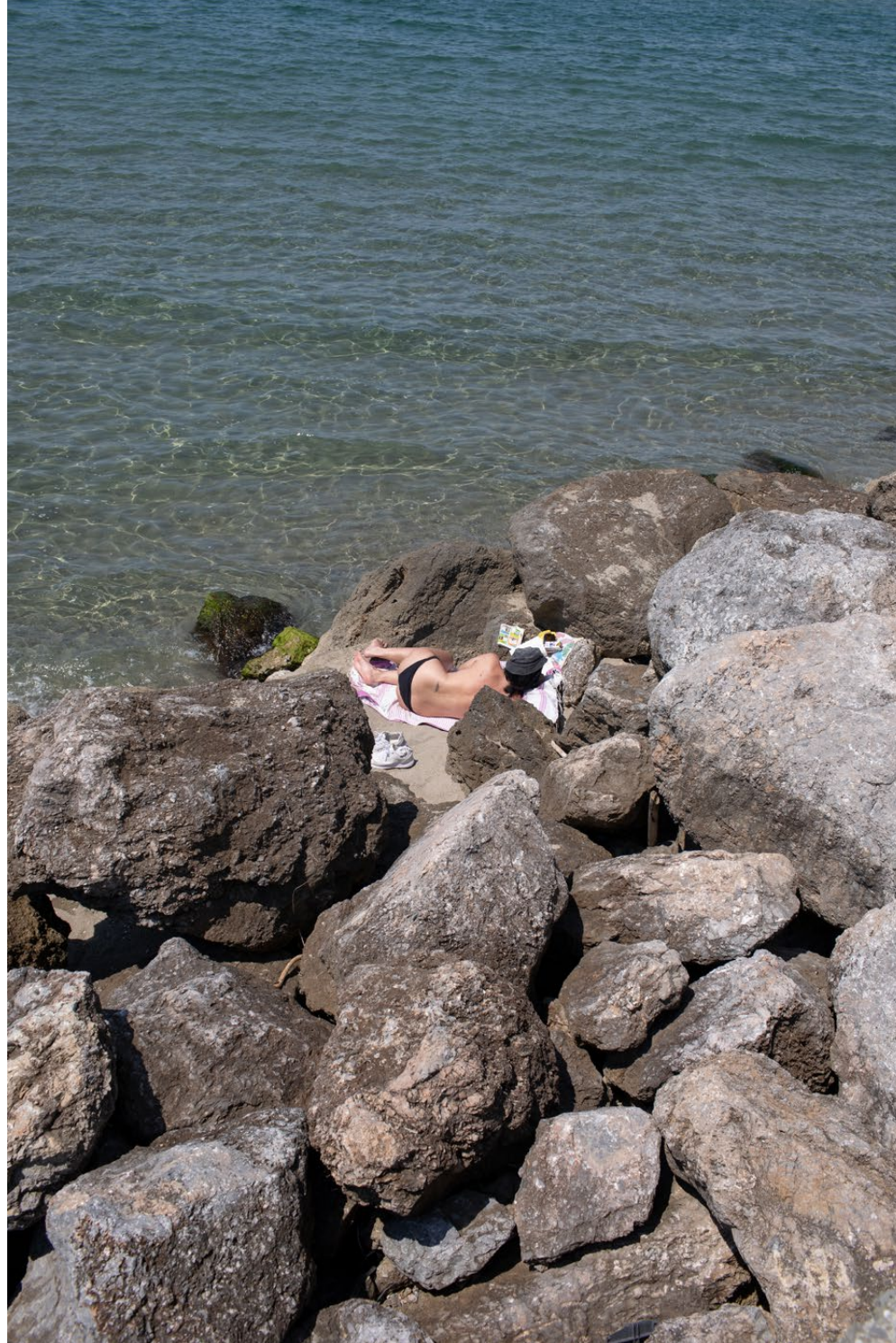
Viareggio (Lucca). Two surfers paddle out into the surf. Among the few activities permitted under the emergency lockdown decree is the practice of individual open-air sports.



Viareggio (Lucca). Aldo, aged 63, reads a book while relaxing in a hammock strung between two driftwood logs on the public beach alongside the so-called Muraglione sea wall.



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Viareggio (Lucca). A woman sunbathes alone amid the rocks at the mouth of the port.



Viareggio (Lucca). Bruno, aged 32, a lifeguard at the Principe di Piemonte beach club, protects himself from the sun and Covid by covering his face with his T-shirt.



Viareggio (Lucca). Two men sit socially distanced on the shoreline, before the season begins and the beach clubs open and lay out their umbrellas and sunbeds.



Viareggio (Lucca). A barman at the Galliano bar, one of the most well known on the seafront, serves a pastry treat.



Bocca del Serchio (Pisa). Not far from the estuary of the Serchio River on the Tyrrhenian coast are makeshift beach shelters known locally as "straccali", which are constructed from driftwood. Built and used during the summer by families and groups of friends for hanging out on the beach and sheltering from the sun, they serve as isolated dens from which to enjoy nature. The structures are regularly destroyed by the authorities.



Bocca del Serchio (Pisa). A young woman walks alone near the estuary of the Serchio River on the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Parallelozero, via Donatello 19/a, Milano Italy
info@parallelozero.com - www.parallelozero.com
+39 02 89281630

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