

# Mediterranean, Mare Nostrum



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parallel zero



Istanbul (Turkey). Two men take pictures from the terrace of the Süleymaniye Mosque.



A Franciscan friar in the garden of Gethsemane in Jerusalem (Israel). According to Gospel tradition, the Gethsemane is where Jesus retreated after the last supper, before being betrayed and arrested. Although research shows that the eight oldest olive trees in the garden are around 900 years old, tradition has it that they grew from replanted branches taken from the original trees that witnessed Jesus' last night. The Franciscan order takes care of the trees since 1681.

## **From Spain to Lebanon, a sea of history and legend**

“We are all Mediterraneans”, wrote a Turkish poet who was among the protagonists of the Gezi Park protests. Yes, we all belong to the same culture born on the shores of the Mediterranean. From the Phoenicians from Lebanon who founded colonies all along the coasts of North Africa, Sicily and Spain all the way to the Pillars of Hercules, to the Homeric legend par excellence – Ulysses, whose odyssey took in the entire Mediterranean, most probably drawing inspiration from the new trade routes opened up by the Greeks with its many fantastical, exaggerated descriptions of exotic locations so typical of sailors and traders.

The Phoenicians are believed to have melted silicon sand and natron to create glass, which was to become so important for the Venetians, who made it into beads that were used as a currency for trade all over the world, sending their galleons out from the Adriatic towards the Orient. Europa, the beautiful daughter of the Titan Tethys, kidnapped by Zeus in the form of a white bull and transported to the island of Crete, is also the daughter of this sea and those people who came from the East.

“Mare Nostrum” is what it was called by the Romans, whose empire embraced the Mediterranean in its entirety. For a period of time the same name was used for an Italian navy mission to save those modern-day followers of Ulysses, before government hypocrisy abandoned them once more to the waves of this sea so rich in history and legend. An incomparable treasure chest of fears, but also exoticism and hope.

*The images were taken between 2010 and 2021.*



St. Julian's (Malta). Two ladies chat at the exclusive Reef Club.



The south-western coast of Sardinia (Italy) with the Laveria La Marmora, a washing plant where the ore from the surrounding mines was washed and then transported by sea.



Favignana Island (Trapani, Sicily, Italy). Francesco Santamaria, today over 90 years old, with a relative. On the island he is known as "the American" because as a young man he emigrated to the United States where he worked on the building of skyscrapers in Manhattan. He represents the generation of emigrants from this small island in the Mediterranean Sea to the new world.



The Arkadhi Monastery in Crete (Greece). Founded in the 11th century – but the current building dates from the 17th – it is a symbol of the struggle for independence from the Turks in the 19th century.





Off-road vehicles take hikers to the crater of Mount Etna (Sicily, Italy). In Greek mythology the volcano was the home of Hephaestus, the blacksmith of the gods, who made lightning bolts for Zeus, which he hurled at the earth when humans made him angry. For Hephaestus worked monstrous creatures, the Cyclops, tall and strong as giants and with only one eye in the middle of their foreheads: the most short-tempered was Polyphemus, the protagonist of an episode in the *Odyssey*.



Syracuse (Sicily, Italy). A just married couple strike a pose for their photo book on a wooden pier.



Rio Marina (Elba Island, Italy). Franco Giannoni, 65, a retired customs officer, is one of the island's two official lookalikes of Napoleon, whom he regularly impersonates during historical re-enactments.



Naples (Italy). Kayaking at the Circolo Nautico Posillipo nautical sports club.



Tourists jumping into the water from one of the boats that offers excursions along the coast of Palma de Mallorca (Spain).



A sign announces the discovery of the famous bronzes off the coast of the village of Riace (Reggio Calabria, Italy). The Riace Bronzes are two statues of Greek origin dating back to the 5th century BC. They were found at sea on 16 August 1972 near Riace Marina, in an exceptional state of preservation. They are considered among the most significant sculptural masterpieces of Greek art.



Gaza (Palestine). Mahmoud Osama Al-Rayashi surfing in front of the city.



Venice (Italy). View of the city from the east. Centre bottom, the Darsena Nuovissima and the eastern entrance to the Arsenal with the tower of the Porta Nuova.





A young Senegalese woman in Nouallies, one of the districts with the highest concentration of inhabitants of African origin in the centre of Marseilles (France). The city has always been one of the largest crossroads in the Mediterranean for goods and people from the African continent.



Santa Maria la Scala (Catania, Sicily, Italy). Sunbathing on a wooden platform.



Catania (Sicily, Italy). A bride in red is photographed in front of the Duomo or cathedral of Sant'Agata. On the right is the fountain with the Roman statue of an elephant carved in basalt, now the city's symbol.



Tiro (Lebanon). A woman bathing at sunset along the city's beach.



Cyrene (Libya). Greek age statues. It is hypothesized they would represent the departed soul.



Sperlonga (Latina, Italy). A woman sits on a wall overlooking the sea.



Capo Testa (Santa Teresa di Gallura, Sardinia, Italy). The lighthouse after a rainstorm.



The showers in the beach in Sutomore, a popular tourist destination in Montenegro, mostly frequented by families and groups of young people.





Tel Aviv (Israel). A young man reads the psalms at Nordau Beach, the beach of Orthodox Jews, which is strictly separated for men and women who can access it on alternate days. The Israeli city is one of the most popular seaside resorts in the entire Eastern Mediterranean and its beaches are separated by category, from Orthodox to gays and lesbians.



The Ginestra caves on the Conero cliff (Ancona, Italy).



Giuseppe and Pietro, young artists from Reggio Calabria (Italy), chose the Amendolea castle as the first site for their project linked to the territory.



Perama, (Athens, Greece).



The Buffavento castle, perched on the Five Finger mountain range in Northern Cyprus. The fortress, in the centre of the Mediterranean, was built by the Byzantines and later restored by the Lusignan, lords of Cyprus after the Christians were driven out of the Holy Land during the Crusader period.



Gatteo Mare (Forlì-Cesena, Italy). At the end of the day Martina enjoys an ice cream at the beach club where she works.



A view of the Strait of Messina (Sicily, Italy).



Bari (Italy), Piazza Bisanzio and Rainaldo with the cathedral of San Sabino. The city's patron saint is San Nicola (St. Nicholas), a native of Lycia (Turkey), then bishop of Myra in the Byzantine Empire. When Myra was besieged by the Muslims, Venice and Bari competed to get hold of the Saint's relics and take them to the West: 62 sailors from Bari organised an expedition, managed to steal the bones of San Nicola and bring them back to their city on 9 May 1087.





Youssou Fall, a young Senegalese, during a training session on a five-a-side football pitch in a square on the outskirts of San Ferdinando (Reggio Calabria, Italy). Near here, in the tent city of Rosarno, live many Africans who have arrived in Italy on rubber dinghies across the Mediterranean. Thanks to Don Roberto, a very committed parish priest, a football team was created that played in the Third Category before being the victim of racist incidents.



Costa Smeralda (Sardinia, Italy), the restaurant of the Phi Beach in Baja Sardinia.



Antonis Xylouris, also called Psarantonis, playing the Cretan lyra in his home in Gazi (Crete, Greece). Together with his brother Nikos (who died in 1980 at 44 and a fierce opponent of the regime of the colonels) he is the head of a family of musicians. Originally from the village of Anoghia, on Mount Psiloritis (Mount Ida where legend has it that Zeus grew up being nursed a by nymph-goat), the Xylouris family represents the soul of Rhizitiko, the "roots" of traditional Cretan music.



Ostia (Rome, Italy). Two lifeguards on a rescue raft.

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