

Corsican Cultural Festivals and Country Fairs

Cultural & Entertainment Festivals

Corsica is a country of cultural festivals and more are organised every year. This section does not list them all - keep your eyes open for posters, read [Corse Matin](#) or ask the local tourist office. Most festivals are organised by dedicated volunteers, passionate about their subjects of interest. Many have attained international renown, but they remain on a human scale and without the pretensions of their big-city counterparts.

There is also an annual publication that may help. It has tours (mainly in Corsica, but also abroad) of groups and individual artistes. It's called *A Canzona in Giru* - and covers the summer concerts. There is also the *Guide des Manifestations Culturelles* (two a year) that covers music, dance, theatre, photography, exhibitions etc. You can get a copy of either or both by sending an email to marie-pierre.valli@ct-corse.fr or from tourist offices, but don't expect wonderful service!

Corsica suffers from a lack of suitable venues for festivals, hence they are concentrated in the summer, when they can happen out of doors. I list websites where there are, otherwise I try to give some other means of contact. If all else fails go to the tourist office in the nearest town, [download my list](#) or go to the Mairie of the place (you can look up the telephone number in [Pages Jaunes](#)).

January

Italian Cinema - Semaine du Cinéma Italien in Porticcio (06 13 40 31 86).

February

Italian Cinema - Rencontres de Cinéma Italien in Bastia (www.festivalcineitalien.com).

March

Archaeology - Journées d'Archaeologie et d'Histoire de Calvi (svegliu@wanadoo.fr).

Spanish Cinema - Journées du Cinéma Espagnol in Bastia (studio.ANIMATIONS@wanadoo.fr).

The Sea - La Mer en Fête in Bastia organised by the association U Marinu.

April

Comic Strips - Rencontres de la Bande Dessinée in Bastia (www.una-volta.com) - a lively festival of the comic strip: exhibition, workshops, lectures + meetings with writers, designers and illustrators.

English Cinema - English Cinema Week in Bastia (www.studio-cinema.com).

Festival of Dreams - 'Scen' è sonniu' in Porto Vecchio is five days of theatre and happenings on the dream theme.

May

The Sea - Fiera di u Mare in Sulinzara on the east coast (fieradiumare.free.fr).

Dance - Festival Ile Danse in Ajaccio (www.artetc.org) - contemporary dance in the theatre and unusual places, with conferences, and workshops.

Fishermen - I Pescadori in Festa in Ajaccio - the fisherman's festival.

Country Sports - Festival Sport Nature at Porto vecchio and in the Alta Rocca.

Festival du Fantastique et des arts éphémères in Calvi – run by the association Calvi Cultura – contact via the Mairie.

June

Photography - Biennale Photographique organised by the Centre Méditerranéen de la Photographie, next in 2006 in Bastia at www.una-volta.com.

Middle Ages - Journées Médiévales in Bonifacio (mariecom@wanadoo.fr).

Jazz - Calvi Jazz Festival (www.calvi-jazz-festival.com) - a week of many concerts and jam sessions in cafés and bars around town and on the beach.

International contemporary arts workshops - Ile Mouvante is held in the hilltop Balagne village of Sant' Antonino and has week long workshops with a concert at the end (tel monika or Arthur Anzelini 04 95 61 70 05).

World Music - Les Voix du Lazaret a singing festival in Ajaccio's old leper colony involving voices from around the world. Tickets from www.lamarge.fr. It's organised by the Jazz in Ajacciu association.

July

Corsican Polyphony - *Canti di Qui* is a festival of Corsican polyphony organised by [A Ricuccata](#) and the commune of Vignale near Bastia.

Blues - Nuits du Blues in Ajaccio (www.ajaccioblues.com) in the outdoor theatre of Casone.

Mandoline Music - Au Son des Mandolines is run by the Association Odyssée (www.ausondesmandolines.com) - from classical to rock, via traditional Corsican.

Guitar Music - Nuits de la Guitar (www.festival-guitare-patrimoine.com) in [Patrimoine](#) near St Florent - many international guitarists converge in this wine growing village.

Rock Music - Calvi on the Rocks (www.calviontherocks.com) is a young people's pop festival (18-35) started to celebrate the 20th anniversary of [Radio Calvi Citadelle](#) in 2003.

Song - Festivoce (www.festivoce.casa-musicale.org) is run by the arts association of Pigna in the Balagne and offers a wide range of serious song from different countries and including several Corsican groups.

Dance - Festiballu (www.chez.com/tutti) in Corte - traditional dance and music (violin mainly) with groups from other countries as well as Corsican fiddlers. You can learn the quadrille and other traditional dances.

Rural Films - Festival Européen de Cinéma et du Monde Rural (festival_lama@yahoo.com) is an intimate high quality festival devoted to films with a village or rural context - in a beautiful mountain village in north Corsica.

Theatre Workshops & Festival - Rencontres Théâtrales de Haute Corse (www.aria-corse.org) - a theatre festival built round many workshops involving both professionals and amateurs over several weeks in the Guissani villages of Olmi-Capella, Pioggola, Vallica and Mausoléo. It results in many performances of plays (some originals) being performed at the end of the festival. It was founded by Robin Renucci, the Corsican actor well known in French films and TV. He and his English wife Lindsey live there. It is regenerating the local economy and a new theatre in an old building is coming soon.

Ajaccio Festival - this one is organised by Pierre Deïna and the Fédération Musicale de Corse (tel 06 15 29 40 19) and covers classical and traditional Corsican song.

People of the Mediterranean - E Petre Nove is a festival of world music at Eccia Suarella, twin villages east of Ajaccio (details from 06 85 67 44 41).

The Battle of Ponte Novu – the association L'Anima di u Rustinu organises a son et lumière to commemorate the Battle of Ponte Novu (1769) – famous defeat of the Corsican patriots under Paoli by the French. Website – www.lanimadiurustinu.com.

ama l'amicu toiu cu u difettu soiu - love your friend with his faults

August

Street and Circus Arts – Festival des arts de la rue et des arts du cirque – seven days of fun and jolity (ten groups, 26 events over seven days) in and around Ajaccio The organiser will be delighted to hear from you: [Maria Vitale of Cirkostard](#). Or contact the Ajaccio tourist office.

Traditional Music - Festivale Musiche in Sermanu (www.musicorsica.com) - the Centre de Musiques Traditionnelles de Corse organises a festival of traditional music and dance; concerts and workshops - lots of participation (you can learn the mazurka, polka, quadrille... or trad instrument playing and there are traditional balls each of the two evenings).

Latin Music - Porto Latino (patricia.scotto@free.fr) is a hot Latino festival in the seaside town of St Florent: South American music aplenty. The tourist office will tell you more.

Music Festival - Festival de Musique d'Erbalunga in Cap Corse - just north of Bastia. Jazz, blues, swing, salsa...

Roman Festival - Festa Antica in Aleria, the old Roman town on the east coast celebrates its past with street entertainment, stalls and fireworks.

Merimée's Colomba - Les Journées Colomba in Fozzano - devoted to Colomba, the title heroine of Merimée's novel in the village where the model for the character actually lived. Organised by the *Association Culturelle Colomba* 04 95 77 08 47 for details of events, including music, theatre and street entertainment. A new film by Laurent Jaoui for France 3 has just been recorded in the village of Castineta, a little place above Morosaglia in the Castagniccia - it's the tenth film of the story since 1915.

Sampiero - Les Journées Samperu Corsu in Bastelica in the south where lived [Samperu Corsu](#), the 'most Corsican of Corsicans in the middle ages. There are seminars, exhibitions, street plays (04 95 23 83 87 or the tourist office in Propriano 04 95 76 01 49).

Polyphony - Canti di Qui in Cervione at Vignale on the edge of the [Castagniccia](#) in the northeast. It's a festival devoted exclusively to Corsican polyphony organised by the association *A Ricuccata* of Santa Maria Poghju (04 95 38 19 37).

Music Festival - Rencontres Musicales Classiques & Contemporaines in Calinzana, near Calvi. many concerts in ancient building in and around the village. Run by the association MusiCal and details from the Mairie 04 95 62 88 58 or www.musical-calenzana.com.

Photography - Biennale Photographique in Bonifacio.

Old Town Festival - Les Nuits de Terra Vecchia: evening happenings over three days in the heart of the old town there are concerts, exhibitions, antiques & craft markets, as well as street theatre and dance (04 95 54 20 40).

Corsican Song - Festival de la Chanson Corse Pasquale Paoli (www.pascal-paoli.com) in Furiani south of Bastia (04 95 31 20 76).

Accordion Festival - it takes place at Cauro, east of Ajaccio and as well as concerts, there's a competition for debutants, the two best of whom will appear at the following year's festival (tel 04 95 25 46 40/04 95 28 42 10).

September

Water Festival - Festi Aqua (www.festiaqua.com) in Propriano in the Vallinco. As well as water based events, there are debates, concerts, exhibitions...

Polyphony - Settimbrinu (www.multimania.com/tava) is an intimate festival organised by the [Tavagna Club](#) in Tavagna in the Castagniccia. It involves mainly Corsican polyphony singers, with a few invited guests from overseas.

Polyphony - Rencontres de Chants Polyphoniques de Calvi - one of the most important Corsican festivals; this year's 5-day edition is co-hosted by U Svegliu Calvese (svegliu@wanadoo.fr) and one of the island's two 'biggest' groups, A Filetta, as every year for the last 15. Filetta sing every night to introduce groups from all over the world.

Mountains - Festimonti at Bocognano, between Corte and Ajaccio. Many workshops as well as mountain events (04 95 53 72 00).

Mountain Films - Journées du Film Montagne Aventure (www.cine2000.fr.fm).

Fest'Aria – an air festival at Ghisonaccia aerodrome on the Costa Serena.

Isula: Ventu di Mare – a festival at the remote fishing village of Girolata (walk there or go by boat!) - seminars and music. Put on by the [Ventu di Mare association](#).

October

Music Festival - Musicales de Bastia (musicales-de-bastia@wanadoo.fr) is an eclectic music festival that includes Corsican and other music (04 95 32 32 30).

Mediterranean Films - Festival des Cinémas du Sud in Ajaccio - Mediterranean films (04 95 21 24 88).

Chess - Open International de Corse - these chess championships in Bastia are becoming more important in the European chess calendar.

November

Wind Festival - The Festival of Wind (www.festival-du-vent.com) - this fun and serious festival takes place in Calvi for everything connected with the wind - on land, in the water and in the air. Run by Serge Orru a passionate enthusiast, not least for the rights of man and the banning of plastic bags. Lots for kids of all ages from dawn till morn and bags of music. Highly participatory. An artist who used to live in Calvi is establishing a similar event in far off Troon - visit Alex Lochrie's site www.troon-promotions.com.

British Film - La Semaine de Films Britanniques (studio.ANIMATIONS@wanadoo.fr) - Bastia's British film week also has debates and meetings with cinema people.

Mediterranean Music - The Rencontres Musicales de Méditerranée take place in towns and villages throughout north Corsica with artistes from many countries.

Spanish Film - Journées du Cinéma Espagnol take place in Ajaccio - Spanish films and events at the Théâtre Kallisté.

Mediterranean Culture - Arte Mare in Bastia is a festival of Mediterranean culture in collaboration with Arte (www.arte-tv.com), the tv channel: cinema, literature, poetry, music, dance, art.

December

Animated Film – the *Festival de dessins animés et cinema animé pour petits et grands* (<http://www.etpourtantcatourne.fr.vu>) is held in Ile Rousse at the Fogota Cinema (contact Annick Simeoni at epctourne@yahoo.fr).

Country Fairs

Country fairs are typically organised by rural clubs (*foyers ruraux*). It is sometimes difficult to obtain information about them except in the run up to them happening. Few have dedicated websites. These fairs are often focussed on a particular trade or agricultural product, but generally have stands not only for the items concerned, but also people offering other locally produced food products and crafts.

The evenings frequently involve concerts by Corsican artistes and dances. Since most fairs are held in the villages of the interior, their settings are generally a delight as well. There are more than 40 each year, only January and October have no fairs, though the majority are in June, July and August. The *Union Régional Corse des Foires Rurales* is the coordinating body and can help with more info: bucagna@aol.com or their postal address is 20136 Bocognano, France.

February

Pig Fair - A Tumbera in Renno between Vico and Evisa- the *tumbera* is the traditional winter pig-killing ceremony, now theoretically outlawed by EU. It celebrates winter and the making of Corsican charcuterie, especially the liver based *figatellu*. Contact tel 04 95 26 65 35; fax 04 95 20 97 03.

Clementine Fair - Le Fête de la Clementine in Antisanti. Contact tel 04 95 44 44 03; fax 04 95 44 44 55.

March

Olive Fair - A Festi di l'Oliu Novu in Sainte Lucie di Tallano and as its name implies, it's the festival of new (olive) oil in Ste Lucie a lovely village in the Alta Rocca on a wooded hillside in the south, near Sartène, where there's an olive oil museum. Contact tel 04 95 78 80 13.

April

Chestnut Fair - Merendella in Castagniccia at Piedecroce is a 'picnic' devoted to the chestnut in the southern part of the Castagniccia. Contact (the Mairie) tel 04 95 35 81 86; fax 04 95 32 84 40.

Cheese & Wine Fair - Fromage et Vin at Cauro Contact (the Mairie) tel 04 95 28 40 89; fax 04 95 28 41 81.

May

Brocciu (cheese) Fair - Festa di a Brocciu at Piana, a beautiful village near Porto near the famous red rocks of the Calanches. Brocciu is a sheep curd cheese used widely in both sweet and savory Corsican cooking, as well as being eaten as is - especially with sugar and *acqua vita*. Contact (the Mairie) 04 95 27 80 28.

St Pancras Fair - Fiera di San Pancraziu at Castellare di Casinca, the mountain region between Bastia and the Castagniccia. Castellare stands on a rocky outcrop overlooking the sea. Contact via [the website](#) or tel 04 95 36 50 39.

Francardu Fair - Fiera di a Ghjuvellinga at Francardu between Cote and Ponte Leccia, which originated in 1924, is agricultural in flavour since it originally celebrated the transhumance.

Gravona Fair - at Pont d'Ucciani near Ajaccio. Contact 04 95 52 83 37.

Corte Fair - Fiera di Corti specialises in fishing, hunting and the mountains, as you'd expect from the capital of central Corsica. Contact 04 95 46 17 09.

Sea Fair - Festimare at Ile Rousse in the Balagne: this sea festival has lots of activities for kids as well as scientific stands, competitions, exhibitions, workshops... it's run by the association *Mare Nostru*.

Cheese Fair - A Fiera di u Casgiu at Venaco is the island's premier cheese festival (www.fromages-corse.org and www.cirval.asso.fr/actualites/rencontre/fiera/index.htm) takes place in this big village, south of Corte; it has a competition open to cheeses from the Niolu, Bastellicaccia, Venaco, Sartène and Calinzana - Corsica's five main cheese types. It's more than just cheese - there are stands for other producers and crafts people (fiera-dicasgiu@wanadoo.fr). Contact tel 04 95 47 00 15.

June

Fishing Fair - I Pescadori in Festa in Ajaccio's Port Tino Rossi includes boat-board jousting and other competitions.

Sea Fair - Fiera di u Mare in Sulinzara on the east coast involves many sea-linked activities including the Corsican jet ski championships, as well as concerts and other entertainment.

Produce and Craft Fair - Terra e Omi at Lucciana south of Bastia is at Cannonica and is subtitled 'the produce of the land and the work of man'.

Horse Fair - Cavall'in Festa the horse fair at Corte will be in its 14th year in 2004; it's the showcase for Corsican horses, donkeys and mules, with craft stands and a mounted parade. Contact tel 04 95 29 42 13; fax 04 95 29 42 31.

St Anthony's Fair - A Fiera di Sant' Antone at Rapale in the wilds of the Nebbiu. Contact (the Mairie) tel 04 95 37 66 47.

Hunting & Fishing Fair - Caccia è pesca at Ponte Novu is set on a site next to the railway station that has been specially prepared.

aiùtati chi t'aiutaraghju - help yourself and I'll help you

July

Lumio Fair - Fiera di a Petra at Lumio in the Balagne is a growing fair that's been going several years; it has only Corsican stands in the street by the church with magnificent views over the bay; music and dancing in the evenings. Contact (the Mairie) tel 04 95 60 89 00.

Pietra di Verde Fair - Culture & Tradition in Pietra di Verde is a fair for crafts and local food delicacies and music, of course Contact tel 06 80 99 26 87.

Wine Fair - Fiera di u Vinu at Luri in Cap Corse is the country's main wine festival - plenty of tastings as well as the prize. Contact tel 04 95 35 04 17; fax 04 95 35 04 17.

Olive Fair - A Fiera di l'Alivu at Montemaggiore in the Balagne and after many years in an olive grove, it now sprawls around this hilltop village - 2004 will be the 16th edition. Look out for the special *Oliu di Corsica* there will soon be an AOC for Corsican olive oil. Contact tel 04 95 62 81 72.

Plum Fair - Fiera di u Prunelu at Cauro, a village to the east of Ajaccio and the fair is named for the river Prunelli; it's organised by the association *A Semperina* and more details can be had from the auberge A Mandria or tel 04 95 28 42 27.

Craft Fair - Salon de Sarrola in Sarrola-Carcopino, 20 kms north of Ajaccio, is a showcase of regional artistic creation and crafts, including demonstrations.

Artisanal Fair at Sainte Lucie di Tallano in the mountains east of Sartene. Contact (the Mairie) tel 04 95 78 80 13; fax 04 95 78 85 46.

Costa Verde Fair - Fiesta in Costa Verde at Moriani Plage on the east coast. Contact tel 04 95 58 70 33; fax 04 95 38 47 41.

August

Artistic Cutlery Fair - Journées internationales du couteau d'art et de collection (www.ricac.com) in Ajaccio. Corsica has a considerable activity in traditional pocket knife making - both practical and decorative. This show invites craft cuttlers from many other countries and the event includes several musical performances and demonstrations. Contact tel 04 95 23 92 91.

Country Fair - Fiera di a Bocca di a Pratu - a wonderful pass above the village of Morosaglia, Pasquale Paoli's birthplace about 20 kms from Ponte Leccia. Plenty of animals at this one - sheep, goats, horses... Contact tel 04 95 39 20 07.

Filitosa Fair - Fiera di Filitosa. This fair is one of Corsica's more important ones and takes place near the best known neolithic site in Corsica in the agricultural

valley of the Taravo north of Propriano in the south. Contact tel 04 95 74 07 64 or (the Mairie in Sollacaro) 04 95 74 61 82; fax 04 95 74 66 20.

Almond Fair - Festa di l'Amandulu at Aregno in the Balagne. It is one of the more recently established fairs and celebrates the early stages of the rehabilitation of the local almond groves. Corsica produces about half of France's almond crop. Contact tel 04 95 61 79 42 or (the Mairie) 04 95 60 09 73; fax 04 95 60 39 90.

Forest and Woodcraft Fair - Festa di u Legnu è di a Furesta at Vezzani, a village tucked away on a very minor road south of Corte in the forest of Sorba and naturally enough, this is a forest and wood products fair, with chain saw sculpture, demonstrations, forest discovery trails etc run by the association *A Leva*; music and dancing, of course. There is a museum of woodworking in the village. Contact tel 04 95 44 00 70; fax 04 95 44 01 21.

Nature Fair - (www.via-romana.org) in the Boziu (St Pancrace Mazzola - NE) that coincides with a mountain trail running event: artisanal products, country clothing, a *cursinu* dog show, mule harnessing...

Hazelnut Fair - Destination Noisette at Cervioni - the hazelnut fair organised by the producer body, *A Nuciola*. Contact tel 04 95 32 84 40.

Art and Tradition - Arte e Tradizione in Castineta, a very attractive tiny village in the Castagniccia, where there are not only produce stands, especially some linked to local traditions, but also Corsican poetry and singing events.

hè megliu à ave a paura chè u dannu - it's better to know fear than harm

Artisans Fair - Fiera di l'Artigiani in the Balagne mountain village of Feliceto is a fair for local craft, food and wine producers. Contact (the Mairie) 04 95 61 71 20; fax 04 95 61 78 79.

Donkey Fair - Fiera di u Sumere at Sant' Antoninu in the Balagne is the donkey fair in this hilltop village, well worth visiting for its own sake. Contact (the Mairie) tel 04 95 61 78 38; fax 04 95 61 77 52.

Regional Park Fair - Foire de Baracci, near Olmeto in the gardens of the Hotel de Baracci, that used to be a spa - more than 80 stands and exhibitions eg of the Regional Park and historical themes. Contact (the Mairie) 04 95 74 60 73.

Fruit Fair - at Vescavato in the Casinca, the primary fruit growing area of Corsica, it's organised by the Associu Vescavatu (04 95 36 66 70) or the café A Funtanone (04 95 36 61 05).

Country Fair - U Scontru di I Pastori at Renno, near Vico north of Ajaccio. Contact tel 04 95 26 65 35 & fax 04 95 20 97 03.

September

A Santa Festival & Fair - A Santa du u Niolu at Casamaccioli in the high plateau of the Niolu plateau is one of the most ancient fairs and is linked to the religious festival that involves a granitula procession after the mass (13H on the Sunday) - Contact tel 04 95 48 03 01 or 04 95 48 03 31 and fax 04 95 48 08 50..

Porto Vecchio Fair - A Fiera di Porti-Vechju (first) - is the fair of Porto Vecchio in the SE. Contact tel 04 95 70 11 14.

Honey Fair - Mele in Festa at Murzo, near Vico and inland from Sagone in the SW is the Corsican honey festival - the product now has its own AOC, like wines. Contact tel 04 95 26 68 60.

November

Chestnut Fair - La Journée du Marron at Evisa on one of the most dramatic roads in Corsica, inland from Porto up to the Niolu. Contact tel 04 95 26 20 09.

Honey Fair - A Nostra Mela at Bastelica, north east of Ajaccio. Contact tel 04 95 27 00 71; fax 04 95 27 02 48.

December

Chestnut Fair - Fiera di a Castagna at Bocognano on the road between Corte and Ajaccio. This chestnut fair is probably the biggest fair in Corsica - as well as many stands for craft and food products (in marquees), there's chestnut fruit and flour competitions. Contact tel 04 95 27 41 76.

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