

# Three Good Reasons to Visit Porcari

People sometimes make fun of me when I proudly say that I live in Porcari. Not many people know this village, except for our important paper industry. Porcari is one of many villages in the province of Lucca, but it distinguishes itself for some characteristics that no other village has.

Our peculiar *Torretta* is surely our first reason to be proud. People might think it's only a small hill with a tiny white house on top, but for a *Porcarese* the *Torretta* is the symbol of the village. Longobards put this hill to good use as a good place from which they could see enemies coming from other villages.

Generations of *Porcaresi* used to meet their friends or spend relaxing hours there. Lots of village events take place upon our hill. The most important is the *Porcari Corre*, an amateur race that takes place in the middle of May and whose path includes the *Torretta*.

The main square is also a nice place to visit. It's not a huge square, but it is the home of the *Commune* (Town Hall). This building dominates the square and is surrounded by meadows and a children's playground with swings and slides. Alongside the *Commune* is the *Palazzo Lazzareschi*, also named *Palazzo di vetro* because it is made of glass. Inside this glass building lots of important exhibitions and meetings take place.

The square is the main spot for teenagers, but also for children. In February, the *Carnovale Porcarese* (Porcari carnival) takes place there and the square becomes a magic place. The floats arrive and kids dressed as animals, princesses and pirates run all around the square. There's a stage with an entertainer who performs typical carnival songs. Our carnival is well-known all over the Lucca province.

Another characteristic element of the Porcari landscape is the *Padule*. This part of the village takes its name from the swamp (in Italian *palude*), which covered this area until the beginning of the 20th century. Today, the *Padule* is characterised by paths surrounded by lots of fields. People go there to ride their bicycles, usually in autumn or spring, because the landscape offers a special view with lots of colours that make you feel at peace. It is an experience that you should not miss! Here the *Padulata* takes place, an amateur bicycle ride

usually planned for the first of May, for the international workers' day. Children and adults leave Porcari's main square with their bicycles, usually in the afternoon, and riding all together they arrive at the *Padule*, where they find a stand with food waiting for them. Children mainly like this event because on this day *Padule* is normally full of mud due to the season's rain.

Come and visit Porcari, to gain your personal impressions of my special village.

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