**Calabria in tavola**

**The Land**

**Calabria is a peninsula within the Italian peninsula, and otherwise known as the toe of the boot.
The Greeks that settled along the Calabrian coast founded many of the region’s most splendid cities, including Reggio, Locri, Crotone, and Sibari.**

**The area quickly came under the control of the Romans, who made Calabria a province of their Empire. The rest of the regional history follows that of the other regions of southern Italy: first it was taken over by the Byzantines, then the Normans, and then the French as part of the Kingdom of Naples. In the 15th century, many Albanians immigrated to Calabria to escape the Turkish invasion. Albanian is still spoken in some towns around Cosentino.**

**Calabria is separated from** [**Basilicata**](http://www.academiabarilla.com/the-italian-food-academy/basilicata-1/default.aspx) **by the Pollino massif. The mountains continue east towards Sila, and then taper off around Aspromonte, where you will find terraces covered with citrus and olive trees. What little flat land you find in Calabria is located along the coast. The Sibari plain is found near the Ionian Sea, whereas Sant’Eufemia and Gioia are found on the Tyrrhenian coast.**

**The entire region is covered with ancient Greek and Roman ruins, as well as Byzantine and Medieval monuments And ruins..**

**The Food**

**Calabria’s rich agriculture influence is evident in regional vegetable dishes. Resourceful Calabrians also thrive on bread, pork, seafood and … licorice.**

**Although the coast was fairly uninhabitable due to natural disasters and marine invasions, fish has always been caught and eaten regularly. Calabrians also seem to make the most of what little vegetation can grow in the mountainous terrain.**

**Bread is a fundamental part of the regional cuisine. Pitta is a type of Calabrian flatbread that is stuffed and seasoned with peppers, tomatoes and herbs.**

**Traditional Foods of Calabria**

**Although this is a region of sheepherders, Calabrians consume more pork than lamb. Calabria is famous for Pork. It is the most used meat here. It is also used to make Prosciutto, Pancetta , Salsiccia , Soppressata, and. other cured dried meat products. However, many of the regional cheeses are made from sheep’s milk, like Ricotta Affumicata Crotonese , a smoked ricotta, Caciocavallo Silano , a cheese aged for various lengths of time and Pecorino Del Monte Poro, considered the best pecorino cheese in Southern Italy.**

**Fish and seafood are used in many regional recipes. Swordfish is extremely common, and tuna to a lesser degree. Popular cured fish are sardines, anchovies, Baccala or Stocco di Mammola( stock fish)**

[**Eggplant Meat-less Balls**](http://www.academiabarilla.com/italian-recipes/regione-calabria/eggplant-meat-less-balls.aspx) **This version of traditional meatballs, made with eggplant rather than meat, is a typical Calabrian appetizer and is quite easy to prepare.**

[**Lasagna with cece or chickpeas**](http://www.academiabarilla.com/italian-recipes/step-step-recipes/lasagna-with-chickpeas.aspx) **This is a first course from the Calabria region, with its characteristic sheets of pasta reflecting an age-old tradition.**

**Calabria’s signature meal is Ciambotta, a traditional eggplant stew.**

**Desserts**

**Mostaccioli are sweets of Arab origin made with honey and sweet wine.  Another local favorite is Torrone di Bagnara, the sweet nougat candy.**

**Pignolata: More popularly known as struffoli in Naples, are delectable fried honey balls that originally come from a Sicilian recipe and are very popular in the region, especially in the city of Reggio Calabria. You’ll especially find these in pastry shops around major holidays like Carnevale and Christmas. Traditional Italian licorice comes from Rossano Calabro and has been known to aide digestion since 1700. The Calabrians are so serious about their licorice that they built a museum dedicated to the plant. Calabrian desserts are similar to those of the neighboring regions.**

**Wines and Liquiore**

**The intense, full-bodied wines of Calabria pair nicely with the flavors of the food and the local products. 90% of Calabrian wines are red and made with the Gaglioppo grape. Look for Cirò, Greco, Nicastro, Squillace and Montonico wines**

**Liquore al bergamotto: After a large meal, make like a Calabrian and sip the region’s digestive liqueur made from bergamot oranges! The concoction, similar to limoncello, is made from the juice of an extremely tart orange found on the orange groves throughout the region. They suggest bringing back bergamot scented teas and perfumes as a great souvenir!**

**So now we have an idea of what to expect to eat in Calabria. The food of Calabria is delicious and unforgettable….you’ll love it!**

**Submitted by Salvatore J. Mangano, PNP**