



GUIDE

PONZA LINE

*Boat excursion discovering
the Pontine Archipelago*

Departure:	11:00 AM - Molo Musco (under the orange lighthouse)
Duration:	Complete circumnavigation of the island
Organization:	Cooperativa Barcaioli Ponzesi

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Safety Tips On Board

Welcome aboard! Today we will spend an entire day together discovering the wonders of the island of Ponza. Before we begin, here are some important guidelines to ensure your safety and comfort during the excursion.

Rules to follow on board

1. Once on board, please go barefoot; flip-flops can only be used to go to the bathroom.
2. You can use the bathroom at any time during the day, except when we are stopped for swimming.
3. The onboard bathroom is not like the one at home: do not throw any objects (e.g., sanitary pads) or paper into the toilet. Everything goes in the bin in the cabin. To flush, hold down the button for about 15 seconds. **The sink water is NOT DRINKABLE.**
4. For those with children: always keep them under supervision.
5. To go to the upper deck, go barefoot; we are not responsible for any injuries.
6. When leaving and entering the port and while sailing, hands, legs and objects must stay inside the boat.
7. Diving from the upper deck is not allowed.
8. During navigation, please remain seated to avoid losing your balance.
9. When boarding from Palmarola beach: board barefoot with rinsed feet (free of pebbles).
10. Palmarola beach has no waste collection service: bring everything back on board for disposal upon return.

NOTE: Make sure to take the right boat by checking the flag matching the color of your ticket.

The Island of Ponza

Geography and territory

Ponza has a characteristic crescent moon shape and covers an area of about **7.5 km²**. The island is predominantly hilly, with four main elevations that, although not reaching the minimum altitude of 600 meters to be called mountains, the locals affectionately call "monti":

Mountain	Altitude
Monte Schiavone	about 152 m
Monte Core	about 201 m
Monte Tre Venti	about 177 m
Monte Pagliaro	about 177 m
Monte Guardia	about 280 m (the highest)

Volcanic origin

Ponza has a **volcanic origin**, evident in the different colors of the rock along the coasts:

Rock type	Color	Characteristics
Trachyte	Brown	Magmatic rock, very hard due to thermal shock of magma in contact with the sea
Tuff	Grey	Composed of sanidine and clinopyroxene
Kaolin	White	Composed of kaolinite

Millennial history

Ponza boasts a rich history dating back to the **Neolithic**. The first inhabitants were the **Volsci**, an Italic people of European origin, who founded the first settlements. Subsequently the island was occupied by the **Phoenicians** and then by the **Greeks**, who gave it the name "EEA".

In **312 BC** Ponza came under Roman rule, becoming an important strategic and commercial center. During the Second Punic War it provided resources to Rome and obtained tax benefits. With full Roman citizenship, the island prospered hosting patrician villas and becoming a tourist destination. It was called the **"Pearl of Rome"**.

Period	Main events
Neolithic	First settlements of the Volsci
Greek era	Phoenician and Greek occupation (name "EEA")
312 BC	Roman rule - strategic center
Middle Ages	Religious and commercial center, pirate raids
1202	Religious influence
1300	Naval battle

18th century	Bourbon colonization by Ischian families
1861	Annexation to the Kingdom of Italy
20th century	Political exile and mining exploitation

The Port and Roman Monuments

The Bourbon port

The port of Ponza preserves important testimonies of the past. Looking up you can see a square-shaped white structure: it is one of the **three Bourbon fortresses** on the island, now home to the **Hotel Torre dei Borboni**. The other two fortresses are the one barely visible and **Forte Papa**, located on the Frontone cove.

Pontius Pilate Caves

Under the monumental cemetery, built on top of a Roman villa from Emperor Augustus's time, are the famous **Pontius Pilate Caves**, built during his empire. Pontius Pilate was the fifth prefect of Judea and remained in office for about 10 years.

The caves are a complex structure of **underwater cavities and tunnels**. Above the water surface there are passages through which you can move from one pool to another. Underwater there are pools and tunnels for seawater circulation, where fish were raised, particularly **moray eels**.



Pontius Pilate Caves

NOTE: The moray eel is a sea snake similar to a grass snake, dark colored with circular yellow spots and white flesh. It is excellent to eat, especially pan-fried in slices.

Inside the main cave, at the back, there is a **pagan altar**. On the ceiling was depicted the constellation of Draco, unfortunately largely collapsed and eroded over time. Steps carved in the rock connected the caves to the Augustan villa.

The Madonna Sea Stacks

Continuing on, we encounter the **Madonna Sea Stacks**, so called because in the 1600s a painting depicting the Blessed Virgin was found, now kept in the church of S.S. Silverio and Domitilla in the port area.

In this area the Romans created a **lighthouse** with a wooden structure with boiling oil in the center, to signal the "formiche" rocks (very low and difficult to see). Under the tip of the sea stack, at about 15 meters depth, there is an **underwater nativity scene**.

The Western Coast

Parata Bay

Rounding the Madonna sea stacks opens up **Parata Bay** with its sandy bottom. The name comes from World War II: the people of Ponza, suffering from hunger, observed that migratory birds (like quail) rested on this cliff. They began to "parare" (local term for "prepare") nets to catch them.

Looking up you can see the **Belvedere**, a hexagonal structure built by the last Bourbon governor in the 1800s, Gaetano D'Ambrosio. Today it is owned by a local doctor who created a botanical garden (check with Pro Loco for visiting hours). In the vegetation you can glimpse the entrance to the **Roman villa of Emperor Augustus**.

Calzone Muto

Continuing on we find the "**Calzone Muto**" sea stack, with a rock formation **unique in the world**, found only here in Ponza and in India. The rock has a square or rectangular shape, typical of unexploded bombs in contact with water after volcanic eruption.

Bagno Vecchio Cove

After Calzone Muto opens **Bagno Vecchio Cove**. High up and in the center of the cove you can see rectangular openings that house a **Saracen-era necropolis**. There are two necropolises on the island: one here and one on Chiaia di Luna bay.

Monte Guardia and the Lighthouse

The "scarrubbata" area (dialect term meaning "landslide") includes **Monte Guardia**, the highest mountain on the island. At the top is the **Guardia Lighthouse**, very important nationally.



The Guardia Lighthouse

Feature	Value
Night range	24 nautical miles (in good visibility)
Importance	6th most important lighthouse in Italy
Mediterranean Trench	6 miles south, depth about 3000 m

Punta Fieno and Chiaia di Luna

Punta Fieno and viticulture

At **Punta Fieno** you can see terraces still cultivated with vines. On the Pontine islands wine is produced and exported throughout Italy. Two wineries produce and bottle directly on the island:

Winery	Wine produced
Casale Del Giglio	Il Faro
Cantine Migliaccio	Biancolella

Chiaia di Luna

Chiaia di Luna is considered one of **Italy's most beautiful beaches**, so much so that it was on the cover image of **Expo 2015**. Its white cliff is spectacular but unfortunately very friable, causing various fatal accidents due to landslides.



Chiaia di Luna

On the right side of the beach you can see an opening in the rock: it is a **Roman tunnel** dug to connect the port to the beach, which in Roman times was a natural landing in case of bad weather from the opposite side. At the top of the cliff is the second **Saracen-era necropolis**.

Capo Bianco and Cala Promessa

Continuing the navigation we encounter **Capo Bianco**, characterized by very white rock and numerous natural caves.



Capo Bianco

Here you can also find **Cala Promessa**, a small cove among the sea stacks.



Cala Promessa

The Lucia Rosa Sea Stacks

The legend

The **Lucia Rosa Sea Stacks** owe their name to a tragic legend. It tells of a noble girl named Lucia, who fell in love with an ordinary boy without noble title. The girl's family refused to bless their union.

Lucia, overcome with despair, on a stormy day climbed the highest sea stack to throw herself into the sea. Her body crashed along the cliff and the waters turned **pale pink** from the blood. She was found after a few days washed up on the beach. The inhabitants dedicated the bay and sea stacks to her: **Lucia** for the girl's name and **Rosa** for the blood in the sea.



Inlet in the Lucia Rosa bay

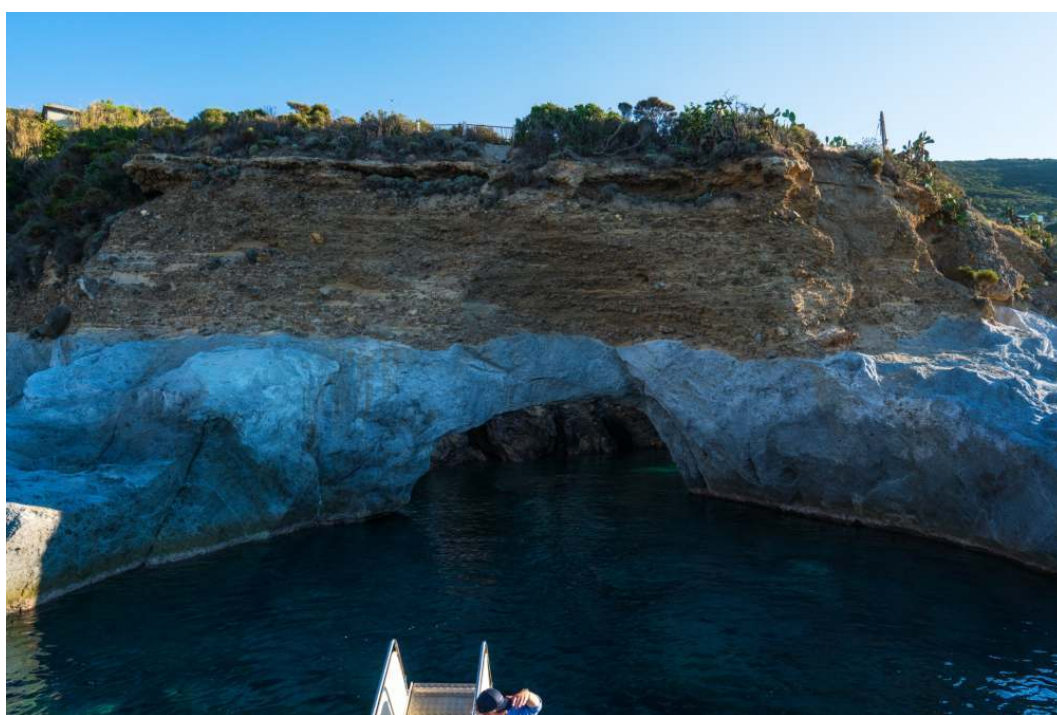
From here begins the **Le Forna** district.

Le Forna District

Cala Feola and the Natural Pools

Cala Feola is a very large bay divided into three parts:

Area	Description
Natural Pools	Very large natural pools where seawater flows, with sunbeds and umbrellas on the rocks
Cala Feola Beach	The only beach on the island where the shoreline is sand and not pebbles
La Caletta	Small V-shaped inlet, above which is the house of journalist Bruno Vespa



Natural Pools

On the wall, among the vegetation, is the **Belvedere della Madonnina**. At the end of the bay is the "Punta Corta" rock.

Cala dell'Acqua

Cala dell'Acqua was very important in Roman times for a spring source (no longer present today). The Romans created **aqueducts** to bring water to the cisterns (still existing in the port area and visitable by booking with Pro Loco).

On the right you can see a large **turtle-shaped rock**. Behind it is "La Cantina", one of the few inlets reachable by land. The remains of an old **bentonite mine** are visible (active 1935-1975, SAMIP company), closed after a popular petition to preserve the natural beauty.

Forte Papa

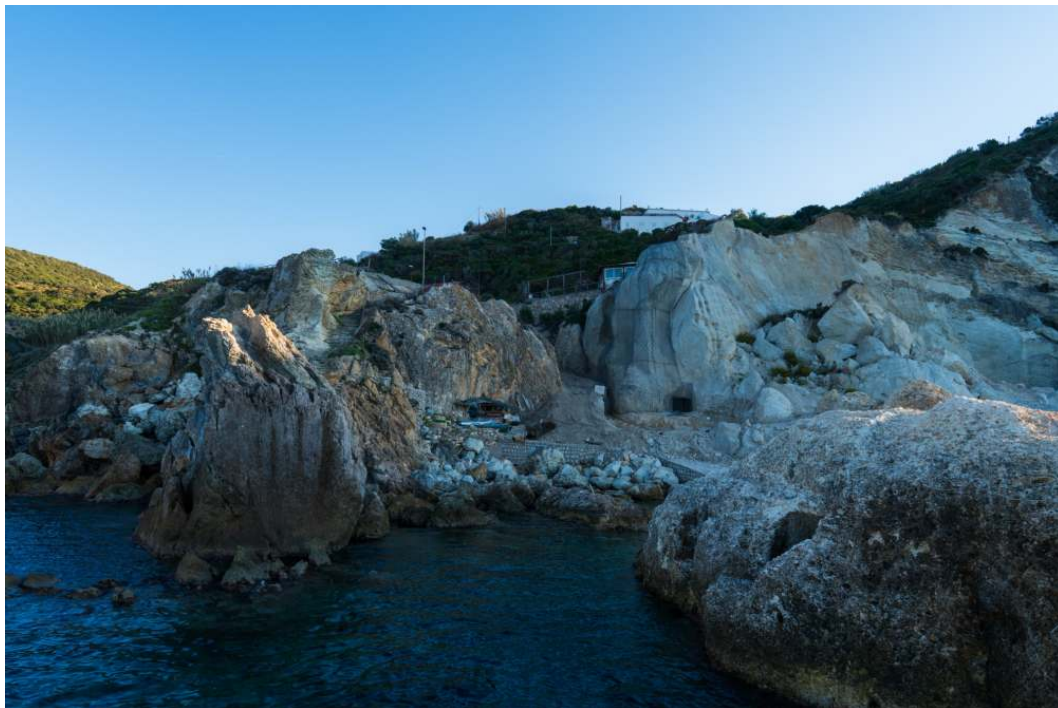
High up, overlooking the cliff, stands **Forte Papa**, a Bourbon fortress where there was the papal summer residence in the 1600s.



Forte Papa

Cala Fonte

Cala Fonte is a small natural bay reachable on foot, in the past victim of recurring landslides (now made accessible). The rock was carved into niches to store **live lobsters** once caught.



Cala Fonte

Cala Felci and the Pontine Archipelago

At **Cala Felci**, among the vegetation, were the remains of a **Cistercian monastery** (one of three in the archipelago: one on Zannone, one on Palmarola - now a villa - and one on Ponza). At the bottom of the beach is a yellow sulfurous rock, used for skin benefits.

*Cala Felci*

From here you can see the islet of **Gavi** (private, not accessible) and the island of **Zannone** (part of the Circeo National Park).

Island	Notes
Ponza	Main island
Palmarola	Visible at 6 nautical miles
Zannone	Circeo National Park
Gavi	Private islet
Ventotene	Inhabited island
Santo Stefano	Former Bourbon prison

The Northern Coast

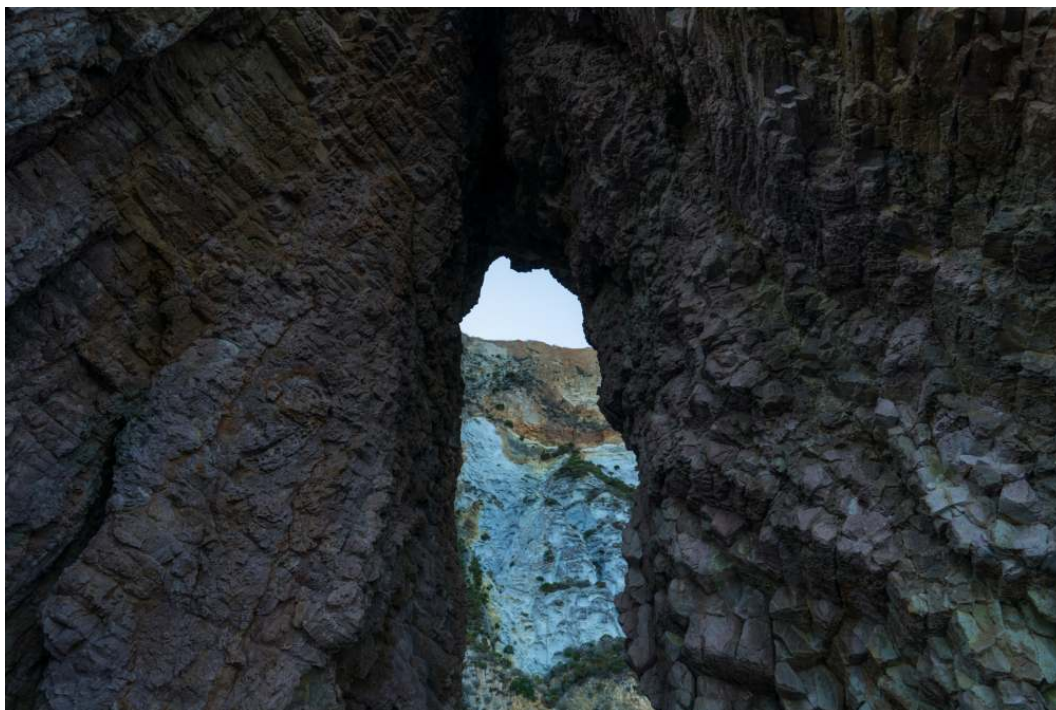
Cala Gaetano and Cala Aprea

Cala Gaetano is one of the few coves reachable on foot (bus stop, 300 steps). Next to it is **Cala Aprea**, named after one of the families of Ischian origin that colonized the island in the Bourbon era.

Surname	Origin
Scotti	Ischian
Sandolo	Ischian
Mazzella	Ischian
Aprea	Ischian

The Natural Arch

The **Natural Arch** is a monument in the middle of the sea. In dialect it is also called "**spaccapolpo**" (octopus splitter), named after a tool used to catch octopuses.



Natural Arch

Cala Inferno

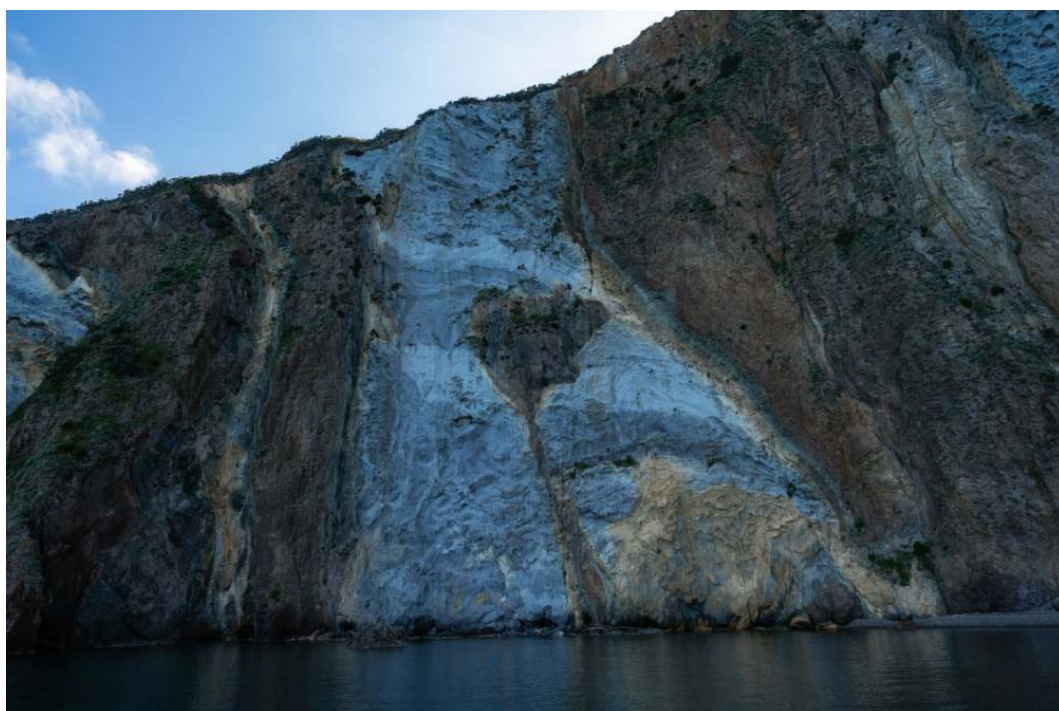
Cala Inferno is the **narrowest point of the island**: the thickness between this cove and Cala dell'Acqua (on the opposite side) is only **300 meters**.

Above, under the houses, you can see a Roman excavation from which the aqueduct started connecting the port to the spring source. Today the island still uses **Roman cisterns** for water collection. In the past the cove was reachable through a Roman tunnel (like the one at Chiaia di Luna), no longer existing.

Here you can see the remains of the merchant ship "**Maria Costanza**", wrecked in 1978 on Le Formiche rocks (one victim). The inhabitants towed it to this cove.

Heart Beach

Heart Beach takes its name from the shape visible in the rock: halfway up the wall, between two strips of brown rock, you can see the shape of a **bleeding heart**.



Heart Beach

Return to the Port

Piana Bianca and The Fortino

At **Piana Bianca**, among the vegetation, you can glimpse the remains of the "**Fortino**" of Frontone, a Bourbon watchtower.



The Fortino

Frontone Beach

Frontone Beach is the final point of the excursion, with the possibility of disembarking. You can return to the port with another boat from "Cooperativa Barcaioli Ponzesi" using the same ticket.

NOTE: Keep your ticket for free return. Pay attention to the time of the last boat.

Useful Information

Service	Details
Pro Loco	For visits to Roman cisterns, Belvedere and other information
Bus	Connection with Cala Gaetano (stop with 300 steps)
Wine cellars	Casale Del Giglio and Cantine Migliaccio
Return from Frontone	"Cooperativa Barcaioli Ponzesi" boats (same ticket)

Point of interest	Type	Accessibility
Pontius Pilate Caves	Historical/archaeological	By sea
Chiaia di Luna	Beach	Via tunnel (closed) / sea
Natural Pools	Bathing	By land and sea
Cala Feola	Sandy beach	By land and sea
Natural Arch	Naturalistic	By sea
Cala Gaetano	Beach	By land (300 steps) and sea
Lucia Rosa Sea Stacks	Naturalistic/legend	By sea
Guardia Lighthouse	Panoramic	By land

Contacts



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