

GASTRO TOURISTS HEAD TO THE MUSEUM OF OLIVE



For museum lovers all around the globe, there is an absolute plethora of things to see and the extraordinary is actually beginning to be the norm. Extreme museums seem to be popping up everywhere, making the usual art museums or sports museums look boring.

Genocide museums, relating to events in Cambodia, Poland and Rwanda are constantly gaining popularity. Staying with the brutal, museums of torture are popular in the Czech Republic and the museum of toilets is always available for extremists in New Delhi.

However, the Italians seem to have mastered the art of presenting the unusual without losing taste. In fact, Italy has, gastronomically, a range of museums to light the taste buds including museums devoted to grapes and wine, Grappa, salt and Rome is home to the museum of pasta. Perhaps the most intriguing is the **Museo Dell'Olivo**, in Imperia, entirely devoted to the olive.

Mediterranean nations have been proud benefactors of the produce of the elixir tree for around 6000 years, so it seems logical to devote a whole museum to it. Indeed, olive oil and the pitted olives themselves have become symbols of Southern European culture to such a degree that they could almost be the national emblems of a number of countries including Italy, Spain and Greece.

The museum gives an insight into the uses of olives and olive oil throughout the centuries and its exhibitions explain how people have become dependent on olives. There are also scripts available for viewing from the times of the Roman Empire where the oil trade is first mentioned in rare letters.

On the backing of the Carli brothers, the museum has been built in art nouveau surroundings and admission is for free. Headphone guides are available in several European languages all in glorious celebration of the olive and its products.

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