

From Genzano di Lucania (Memorial Park) to Banzi (Orto dei Monaci Archaeological Area)

A short yet evocative walk linking two places of great historical and spiritual charm: Genzano di Lucania and Banzi. Covering approximately 4 kilometres, with an elevation gain of 140 metres uphill and 170 metres downhill, the route can be completed in just over one hour. Classified as easy and suitable for everyone, it follows paved, compacted and dirt sections, offering a relaxing experience immersed in a rural setting of remarkable harmony.

The walk begins in Genzano di Lucania, a village overlooking the broad Bradano valley, where rolling wheat-covered hills alternate with small woodland areas and scattered *masserie*. The starting point is the Memorial Park, a green space dedicated to those who fell in the wars, located in the heart of the town. From here, a gentle descent soon leads out of the built-up area, among the scents of the countryside and south-facing views.



Figure 1. Memorial Park (Genzano di Lucania)

The path continues through cultivated fields and ancient farm tracks, where the eye wanders across golden hills and isolated farmhouses. Typical of the hilly areas of the Bradano valley, the terrain alternates expanses of wheat and olive groves changing colour with the seasons—from the fresh green of spring to the warm gold of summer. Along the way, one senses the distinctive tranquillity of Lucanian rural life, where time appears to slow and every step becomes an act of quiet contemplation.

Subtle traces also remain of the ancient presence of Benedictine monks, who founded hermitages, mills and monasteries in these lands, spreading knowledge and spirituality across the region.

The walk concludes in Banzi, at the Orto dei Monaci Archaeological Area, a site of exceptional importance documenting continuous settlement from the seventh century BC through to the Middle Ages. Here lie the remains of ancient Roman Bantia, including a *domus*, paved roads, an augural *templum* dedicated to Jupiter, *Flus* and the Sun, as well as the medieval Abbey of Saint Mary, founded between the 8th and 9th centuries. From the archaeological area, wide views open across the valley and surrounding hills—a peaceful setting where silence and light still seem to preserve the presence of the monks who once lived here.

The route from Genzano di Lucania to Banzi is a short but richly evocative journey, ideal for those who enjoy combining walks in nature with cultural discovery. Along these paths, one can sense the ancient memory of medieval Lucania, where faith, land and knowledge were intertwined within Benedictine monasteries. It is a perfect itinerary for those seeking a slow and contemplative experience among fields and ruins, silences and endless horizons.

A walk that invites the traveller to look back through time, while embracing the present with the same spirit of serenity and reflection that once animated pilgrims and monks of the past.



Figure 2. Orto dei Monaci Archaeological Area (Banzi)