

From Ginestra (Village of Murals) to Barile (Steccato Fountain)

A short yet richly evocative walk linking two villages with a strong sense of identity, Ginestra and Barile, in the heart of the Vulture area. Covering 7.4 kilometres, with an elevation gain of 270 metres uphill and 250 metres downhill, and an average walking time of around two and a quarter hours, this intermediate-level route offers an intense experience shaped by nature, history and deep-rooted traditions. The trail alternates paved, compacted and dirt sections, set within a hilly landscape moulded over time by both nature and human labour, where vineyards and olive groves give way to stretches of golden tuff and panoramic views of Mount Vulture.

The walk begins in Ginestra, one of the most distinctive towns in Basilicata, founded in the 15th century by Albanian exiles fleeing the Ottoman invasion. Known as the Village of Murals, Ginestra welcomes visitors with an open-air art trail, where the façades of houses recount—through vivid and symbolic paintings—the history, language and traditions of the Arbëreshë community.



Figure 1. Village of Murals (Ginestra)

Leaving the village behind, the path immediately opens onto fields and rolling hills, within a bright and silent rural landscape. The route runs along the slopes of Mount Vulture, an ancient volcano whose dark, fertile soil has given rise to one of southern Italy's most renowned wines: *Aglianico del Vulture DOCG*. Walking among rows of vines and expanses of olive trees, one senses the deep harmony between nature and human labour, in a land where viticulture has for centuries been a cornerstone of the local economy and culture.

The final destination of the walk is the Steccato Fountain in Barile, one of the town's most emblematic landmarks, located in the oldest part of the settlement. This elegant 17th century structure, built of local stone, is decorated with apotropaic heads from which water flows, and with a coat of arms depicting Our Lady of Constantinople, patron of the town. A symbol of faith and communal identity, the fountain brings together art, devotion and popular tradition in a harmonious whole.

The route from Ginestra to Barile is a walk that speaks of roots and rebirths, of peoples who have been able to integrate different cultures into a welcoming and fertile land. Every step tells the story of a Basilicata that, among hills, vineyards and memories carved in stone, continues to preserve its authentic and hospitable soul.

It is an ideal itinerary for those seeking a short yet intense excursion, combining rural landscapes, history and identity, in one of the most evocative areas of the Vulture region, where arbëreshë culture and the power of nature merge into a timeless story.



Figure 2. Steccato Fountain (Barile)