



ELBA

PORTOFERRAIO

ITALY

Like Napoleon himself, Elba is a relatively small island. It is about a dozen miles across the water from the mainland of western Italy. With the Ligurian Sea to the north, the Tyrrhenian Sea to the south and French Corsica visible to the west.

For centuries, unless they were a pirate or soldier, if someone said they were going to Elba it usually meant a short life of exile and slavery digging deep in the iron mines. It was the rich iron mines of Elba which made every conqueror in the Mediterranean lust for this small island. By the time Bonaparte rowed to Portoferraio's pier in 1814, and proclaimed to the joyous crowd "I am your King!", Elba and her people had been badly abused.

With its lovely capital of Portoferraio, today Elba is a warm and friendly island dotted with quaint towns, wonderful people, beautiful scenery and a rich, if often turbulent, history. This is a nice place for an Emperor to have called home...whether he wanted to or not.

HISTORY

Late at night on April 24, 1814 on a dusty post-road near the southern French provincial town of Aix there was a commandingly loud knock upon the door of the inn. The old wife of the innkeeper, candle in hand, hesitantly opened the heavy wooden door. In front of her, holding the reins of his exhausted mount, stood a uniformed Royal Outrider, his boots caked with dirt and his cloak splattered with mud. He was the vanguard of diplomats and high ranking military officers. The outrider had galloped ahead to arrange for the arrival of the entourage. Their carriages, accompanied by a large detachment of heavily armed cavalry would soon reach the inn. They were to refresh their mounts, quickly eat and continue their hard ride through the night south towards the Mediterranean coast. "Prepare horses for His Majesty." The outrider ordered. The old woman looked at him with a combination of hate and vengeful opportunity. "Then it is true!" she said. "A bas le tyran! A bas la mort!" She grabbed firm hold of the outrider and held the point of a large, sharp kitchen knife next to his heart. "You, you must kill the tyrant." she whispered to him. "If you don't assassinate the Emperor he'll surly return." Hearing the thunderous approach of the carriages and cavalry, the startled and frightened servant broke free of the old woman's death grip. He threw his cloak around his shoulders, left the inn and stepped into the blustery night. The carriages, diplomats and cavalry guard were transporting to the Mediterranean coast none other than Napoléon Bonaparte. A heavily armed British frigate was awaiting his arrival.



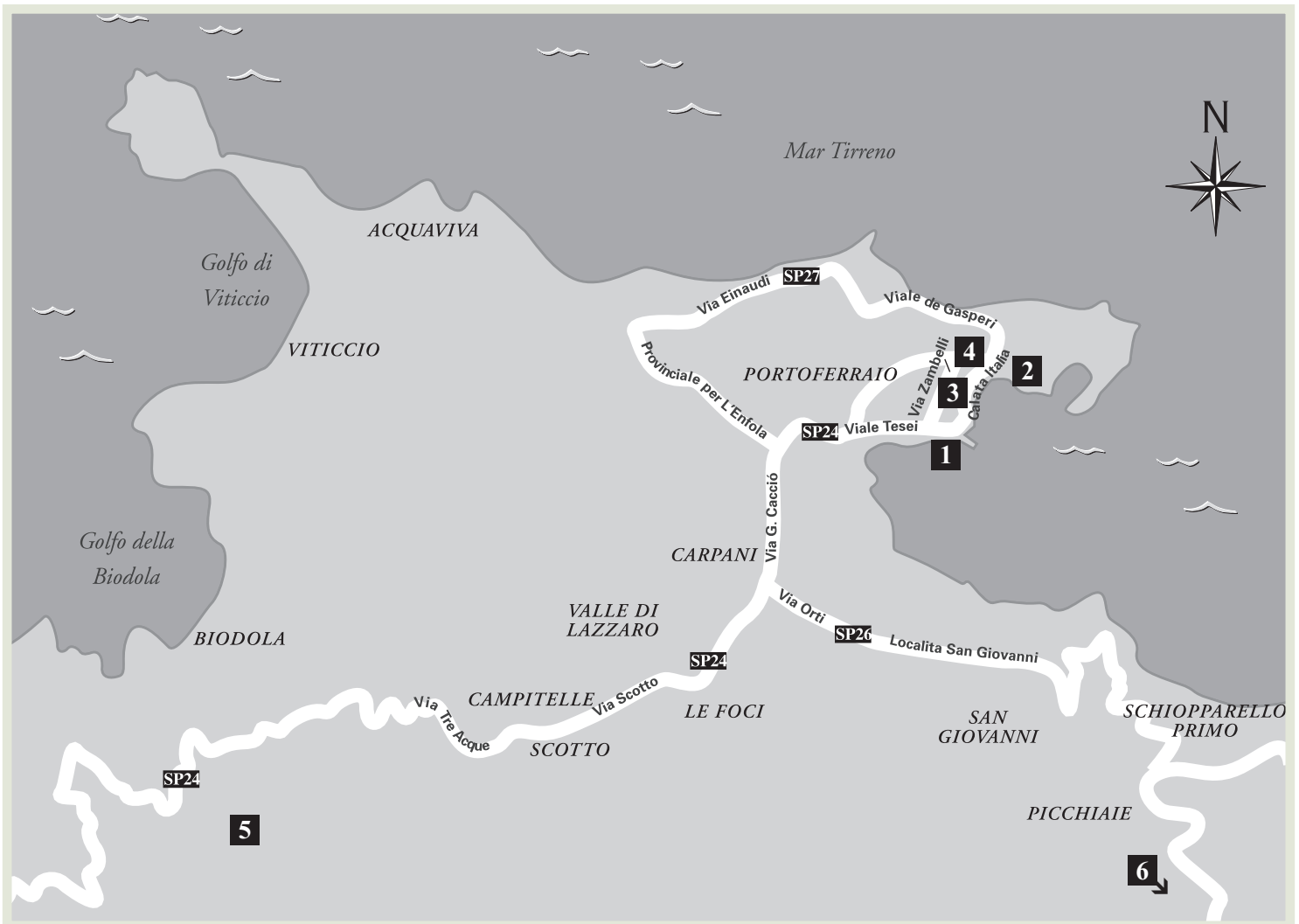
After twelve long years of war and literally millions dead on the battlefields of Europe and Russia, barely three weeks earlier, on March 31, 1814 Napoléon's army had been soundly defeated at the Battle of Paris. Bonaparte was forced to abdicate. Now, rather than ruling a vast portion of Europe, the conquered Emperor would rule over a small, poor and inconsequential rock set twelve miles off the western coast of Italy. Bonaparte was to be forever cast into exile; humiliated and banished to the island of Elba.

Bonaparte's rule over the humble island was benevolent and paternal. Though maintaining the trappings of emperor he did as much as he could to improve the lives of his subjects. Magnanimous, he was sincerely concerned for his people. The Emperor's devotion has not been forgotten to this day. Yet Elba could not hold him. Ten short months following his triumphant welcome into Portoferraio he would change the world again...forever.

For weeks Bonaparte had been meticulously planning his escape from Elba. Late on the night of February 26th, 1815 Napoléon and approximately 1,200 loyal officers and soldiers quietly boarded a rag-tag fleet of seven small ships. They avoided British surveillance and quietly sailed from the harbor towards the southeast coast of France. Bonaparte, together with his loyal veterans of the Grande Armée then marched

through the Alps and on to Paris to reclaim the Imperial throne. When he sailed from Portoferraio, the Emperor of Elba was only 700 miles and 100 days from his Waterloo.

Events forever engraved upon the pages of history, Napoléon's exile to and escape from Elba, his triumphant return into Paris and his ultimate defeat by the armies of Wellington and von Blücher at Waterloo, Belgium; all this may never have taken place if...on that stormy night just ten months earlier, her kitchen knife held close to the heart of the trembling Royal Outrider, if the old wife of the innkeeper had only known. The man she seized in her grasp, the man she was encouraging to assassinate the fallen sovereign, was not a simple servant sent ahead to prepare the way for His Majesty. This servant was actually disguised so as to foil any attempt on his life. Yet he now found sharpened steel pointed at his heart. The terrified outrider was in fact, the most feared, most hated, most cunning and most powerful man in all the world; he was the very man the old woman rightly predicted would return from exile to shed even more blood on European soil. He was the deposed Emperor of France. Unbeknownst to her, for that instant, that one moment in time, the old innkeeper's wife held in her grasp at the point of her knife the one man she and so many others wanted killed for his crimes, the soon to be Emperor of Elba ... Napoléon Bonaparte.



PORTOFERRAIO PLACES OF INTEREST

When Emperor Napoléon Bonaparte stepped into exile as he came ashore on Portoferraio's waterfront in April, 1814 he was taken aback by the dilapidated town. Only his trusted and loyal aid-de-camp, noticed His Majesty's veiled disappointment. Napoléon quickly came to care for the people of Elba. In his short stay he did as much as he could to improve the quality of life on the island. If the Emperor of Elba were to have the opportunity to return to the island today there can be no doubt His Majesty would be very pleased to see what a wonderfully beautiful place it has become and what a warm and welcoming people remain.

1 The **Medicean Darsena** is the beautiful Portoferraio waterfront. Lined with shops and cafés on one side and the boats in the harbor on the other, this is a relaxing place to stroll or simply sit and enjoy cool drink.

2 The **Medicean Fortresses** guards the harbor and town. It was built in the mid 1500s under the direction of Cosimo de Medici, the Archduke of Florence.

3 The **Palazzo Comunale** dates to the 1500s. It was here Napoléon first stayed when he arrived on to Elba.

4 **Villa I Mulini** was Napoléon's first permanent residence on Elba. The expansion and renovation of the site and gardens took place under the meticulous direction of the Emperor.

Beyond Portoferraio

5 **Villa San Martino** was the summer residence of Napoléon. It was designed with a bit more imperial elegance than his villa in the city. Following the Emperor's death (on the mid-Atlantic island of St. Helena) the villa underwent extensive renovation to preserve the memory and glory of Napoléon's time on Elba.



6 **Porto Azzurro** looks out over the Gulf of Stella and Lacona Bay. The harbor is guarded by a medieval era fort built during the time of Spanish rule.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Portoferraio and Elba we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Order Form or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Bargaining: Most items have fixed prices, but it may be possible to get a discount on a large purchase. It is normal to bargain at markets, except for food items.

Tipping: Generally a 10% service charge is added to restaurant bills, however, as this amount does not all go to the waiter, it is normal to offer a 5% tip to the waiter in addition to any

service charge. For taxi drivers, a 5-10% tip is acceptable.

LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

The foods and recipes of nearby mainland Tuscany have been influential upon the cuisine of Elba. Interestingly, yet understandably, sailors and fishermen who made Elba home for countless generations brought back to the island dishes and spices they discovered throughout their voyages. The cuisine of Elba is simple and much of it involves local seafood. Cacciucco is a popular fish stew. Cuttlefish, squid and octopus, whether fried, grilled or in soups or pasta, are always fresh and delicious. The island is famous for its nearly countless variety of mushrooms and the locally produced honey is distinctively delicious. Ham, cheeses and a wide selection of Italian salami is readily available.

Elba's vineyards have been cultivated and their wines enjoyed for thousands of years. There are also locally produced liquors called Limoncino (from lemons) and Arancino (from oranges). Both of them have a distinctively fresh taste.

SHOPPING FACILITIES

A variety of shops and stores can be found while strolling throughout Portoferraio. The Marciana Marina is popular for shopping and relaxing.

Keep an eye out for beautiful handmade ceramic pieces designed and created by local artists. Other popular items are Italian leather goods and handmade crafts and jewelry from the regions of Florence and Tuscany. Locally produced honey is delicious.

LOCAL CURRENCY

The official unit of currency of Italy is the Euro (€ - EUR). Most stores accept major credit cards.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE

The Portoferraio Post Office is located at #7 Via Manganaro.

Dial the following access numbers to use a personal calling card:

AT&T: 800.172.444

MCI: 800.90.5825

TOURIST INFORMATION

The Tourist Information Office is located at #150 Via Carducci.

TRANSPORTATION

Taxis are available. It is important to negotiate a fare before departing. Some taxi drivers may accept U.S. dollars.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

English - Italian

Yes - Sì

No - No

Good Day - Buon Giorno

Good-bye - Arrivederci

