

Your Headline Will Go Here

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We were arriving on Corsica at 8am, which meant a very early breakfast, but a great chance to see the sunrise. And what a sight; the tip of the island came into view and the clouds were doing something rather special.

Although I'd had a shower on board, I still felt slightly grubby as we docked in Bastia – a much smaller port than Marseille – and within 15 minutes I was taking the short walk to the Continental Hotel. It was too early to check in, so I reluctantly left my main bag in reception and tried to explore.

I say tried because at the end of March, Corsica hasn't quite woken up or the tourist season. A late Easter this year meant many of the cafes were still closed, and those that were open weren't exactly doing a roaring trade. Given that the island is 150km long and nearly 90km wide I needed some AI guidance for suggestions of what to do.

It's answer was one of the best of the trip. Corsica has a small rail network. It's not included in the Eurail pass but the fares are modest, given the terrain being covered. From the moment you arrive by sea, you notice how hilly and green the place is.

The chances are you've never heard of Calvi. But my AI assistant did not disappoint. Directing me towards the impressive citadel, it told me that the village is

reportedly the birthplace of Christopher Columbus. Which is interesting, because I've visited his house – in Genoa, Italy. A bust of Columbus sits atop a stone boat on the approach to the citadel; they're clearly claiming him as their own

The truth is, Columbus's early life and precise origin seems to be disputed. And every historian loves a conflicting story, because uncertainty creates a great story – and great stories become mythical. It really doesn't matter – because whether Chris crossed here or not, they have another claim to fame in Calvi – it's where Napoleon came from. And despite his heroic stance for the people of France, his family were originally from Italy, even though Corsica at the time was under French rule.

It's too warm for such confusing stories, but Calvi's citadel is worth climbing, if only to discover you can drive up here – and people live in apartment blocks right at the top.

“An amazing pull quote will appear here.”



The views are stunning – the Med sparkles in perfect azure, the mountains frame neatly behind the water – and on the water itself another piece of fascinating history.

This is the Pogoria – badged with the City of Genoa on its hull, but flying the Polish flag. A quick check with AI tells me that this tall ship was built in 1980 as a way of training young people about seamanship. The date is particularly interesting, since 1980 was around the time that Lech Walesa was preparing his fellow shipyard workers to lead a revolution against Soviet rule; could the Pogoria be the perfect legacy of the Solidarity movement?

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