

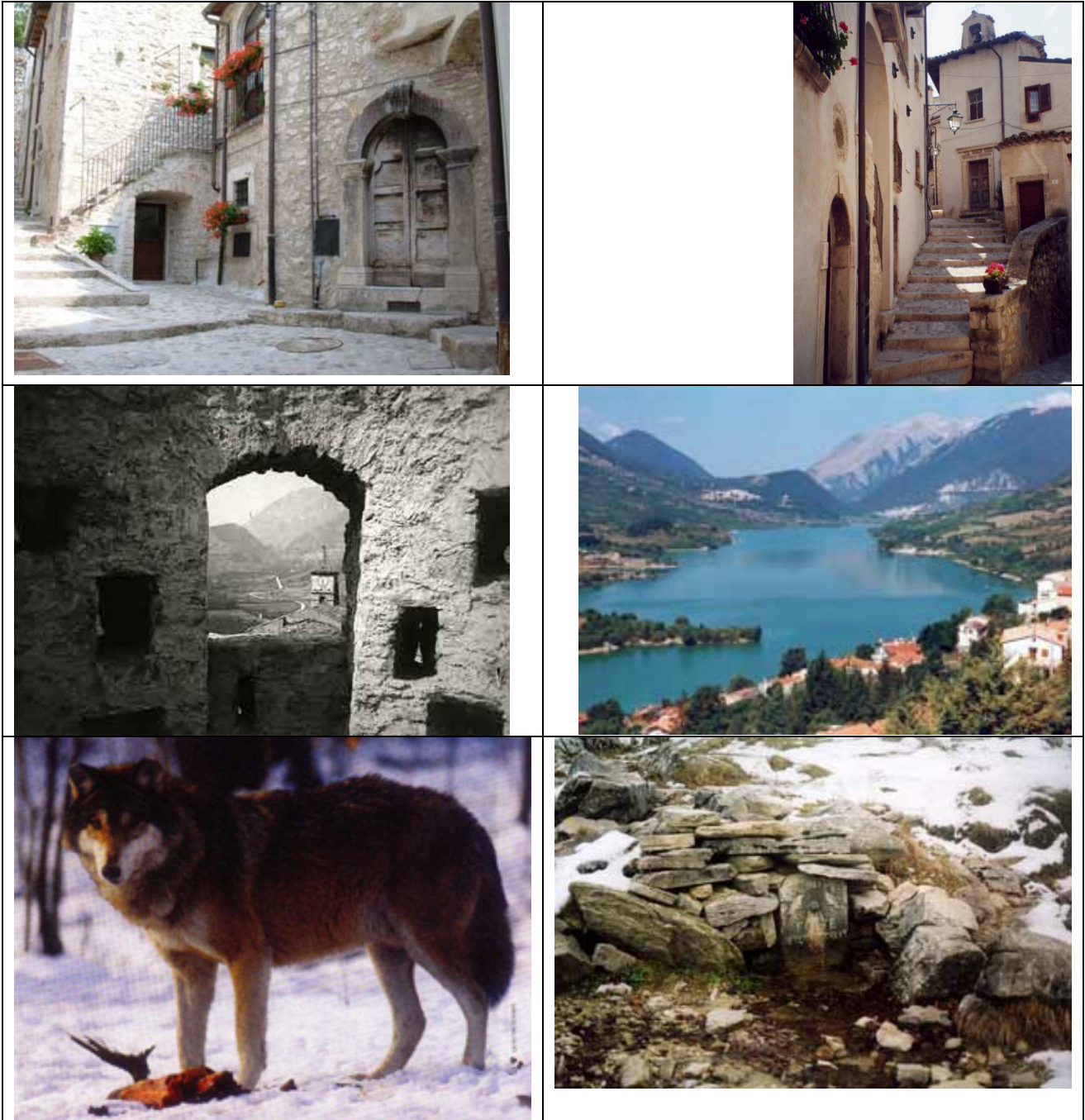
BARREA

The village of Barrea descends from the pre-Roman population of the Sannitis that linked their destinies to the village. Currently, along the shores of the lake or in the nearby archaeological site of "Alfedena", traces abound from this period. There is an official document from the year 996 in which the ancient name of Barrea, "Vallis Regia", first appears. This mentions that Barrea was given to the duke of Spoleto during the dark and terrible feudal times in Italy, a period noted for its anarchic regimes and barbaric raids. Perhaps, mainly to protect themselves from the fierce raid of the Unnis, the inhabitants of the valley floor sheltered near a Benedictine monastery in a strategic position on the precipice of the river Sangro. Even today the monastery still exists and has withstood the ravages of careless men and the assault of time and the elements. In the following centuries, the inhabitants of Barrea built a tangle of practically impregnable houses along the south-western side of the valley. Everything is protected by nature on one side and by observation towers; one round and one square; and defensive walls on the other. History reveals stories of this town that mirror other examples found in Italy, bloody wars, rivalries and even devastating earthquakes.



The area played an active role in Abruzzo also after the unification of Italy. Fighting took place against outlaws and bandits found their refuge among mountains. Barrea, could therefore play the role of a protagonist in telling its history of small and large events, as the German construction of the "Gustav Line" that crossed the village to stop the Anglo-American invasion in Second World War.

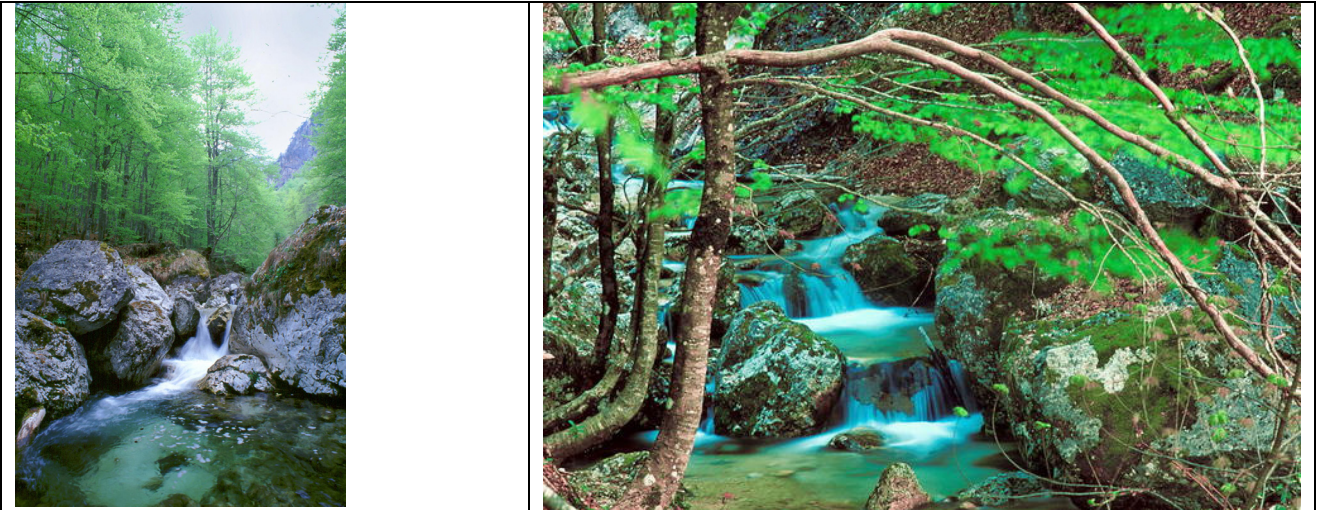
The town dominates on a high cliff the sides of its ominous lake. From the castle of the XIII century remain few traces of the old tower. Among the artistic attractions, the church of Saint Thomas deserves particular attention, from the internal baroque-style altars, the church of Saint Rocco and the church of Saint Maria of the Baia. Around the inhabitation are visible the remains of the necropolis.



The village, that dominates the most beautiful valley in the whole of the "National Park of Abruzzo" is surrounded by a ring of solemn mountains that culminate in the 2249 feet of the "Monte Greco", whose sides are covered by thick Beech forests and ploughed by water courses, almost all tributaries of the River Sangro that is restrained at one end of the valley by a dam creating the pretty artificial lake. Here visitors can have some relaxing time in the equipped beach (solarium, canoes).

From the historical centre and surrounding area, depart some splendid walks that allow visitors to reach the most important destinations found in this part of the park, such as; Lake Vivo, the Forca Resini mountain refuge and Lake Pantaniello.

Must to visit: reserves of Camosciara, Val di Rose, Feudo Intramonti, Colle di Liccio.



For ski addicts some of the most important Mountain tracks are reachable in few time: Passo Godi, Pescasseroli and Roccaraso.

A visit to Barrea is recommended in every season to fortify the soul, admire the extraordinary landscapes and spend a really enchanting time. This is made more comfortable and enjoyable by the tourist facilities that allow them to appreciate the hospitality, the local cuisine and the singularity of this strong, kind and generous land and its sincere and cordial people.

The gastronomy offers a wide range of genuine food that are based on the local agro-pastoral tradition: cheeses, sheep, meat, legumes.



During Christmas and Easter time, Barrea offers some enchanting traditional festivals with the beautiful Christmas Crib, built along the Sangro River Gorges, and the Passion of Christ during which actors show some of the most important moments of the Christ death. Many festivals take place also in summer time as the patron's celebrations dedicated to The Madonna delle Grazie and St Thomas, in addition to other profane feasts.

