

You can easily reach **Caserta** from Salerno (70 Km) in different ways; you can take the train and reach Caserta train station in about an hour or by car taking the A30 highway (Caserta-Salerno). You can also take the bus from Salerno to Naples and there (P.zza Garibaldi, in front of Central train station) you can take the bus to reach Caserta.

Caserta's main attraction is its Royal Palace (listed as Unesco World Heritage Site). The palace was created in the 18th century by the Italian architect Luigi Vanvitelli as a Versailles-like residence ("Reggia") for the Bourbon Kings of Naples and Sicily. It is one of the most visited monuments in the country.

Inside are more than 1200 rooms decorated in various styles. It has been the set for several famous movies such as Star Wars and Mission Impossible III. It was the largest palace and one of the largest buildings erected in Europe during the eighteenth century. The political and social model for Vanvitelli's palace was Versailles, which, though it is strikingly different in its variety and disposition, solves similar problems of assembling and providing for king, court and government in a massive building with the social structure of a small city. The king's primary object was to have a magnificent new royal court and administrative centre for the kingdom in a location protected from sea attack. The palace has some 1200 rooms, including two dozen state apartments, a large library and a theatre modelled after "teatro San Carlo" of Naples. The garden, a typical example of the baroque extension of formal vistas, stretch for 120 ha, partly on hilly terrain. It is inspired by the park of Versailles, but it is commonly regarded as superior in beauty. The park starts from the back façade of the palace, flanking a long alley with artificial fountains and cascades. A large population of figures from classical antiquity were modelled by Gaetano Salomone for the gardens of the Reggia and executed by large workshops. The park is two miles (3.2 Km) long and contains many waterfalls, lakes and gardens, as well as a very famous English garden.

Other main sights are:

Palazzo Vecchio ("Old Palace"), a construction of the 14th century renovated by Luigi Vanvitelli as provisional residence for the royal court;

The Cathedral (18th century);

The Aqueduct of Vanvitelli (18th century);

The most important frazioni are:

Casertavecchia is the ancient centre of the Comune and former bishopric seat;

Vaccheria which housed the stable of the Royal cattle;

Falciano is a former bishop seat; it includes a 16th century palace;

Piedimonte di Casolla has an ancient Benedictine abbey built over a roman temple dedicated to Diana.

San Leucio is a frazione of the comune of Caserta; it is most notable for a resort developed around an old silk factory, included in the UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE sites list in 1997. In 1750 Charles VII of Naples, advised by minister Bernardo Tanucci, selected this place for an unusual social and technological experiment, a different model of production based on technical innovation and alert to the needs of workers. In its early days San Leucio resort was a place for pleasure and a royal hunting preserve, built on the ruins of Saint Leucio church. It was here

that Charles and the young king Ferdinand built a silk factory. The complex was transformed into a silk production site and industrial buildings were added, which was quite unique in late 18th century Europe. Architect Francesco Collecini designed these industrial buildings, where noisy looms were installed next to royal apartments and a sitting room became a chapel for the workers.

A new village was built for workers' residences and a large community of silk weavers grew into this industrial town which in 1789 was deemed the "Real Colonia dei Setaioli" (The silk weavers royal colony). In San Leucio the most advanced technologies known in Europe at the time were used throughout the process to obtain the finished products. The members of the colony had a privileged status with a modern social security system.

San Leucio resort had further growth during the French rule from 1806 to 1815. The heritage of king Ferdinand still survives today in the local silk and textile firms which work on an international scale to elite foreign clients as the Buckingham Palace, the White House, the Quirinale Palace, the Palazzo Chigi. San Leucio resort is home to a Living Silk Museum with some original old looms and machinery restored and displayed inside the Belvedere courtyard, showing all the phases of silk productions, from the old looms and machinery to finished products.