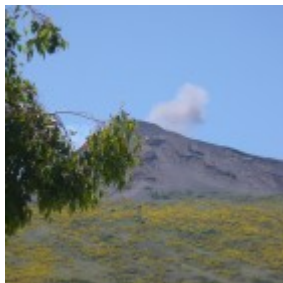




# SICILY

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## Sicily



### General information about Sicily

Several low cost airlines fly to cities in Sicily, we have flown to Palermo and then travelled around by boat, train and bus and also to Catania, the second city. The scenery in Sicily is stunning and there are so many architectural gems to visit, in Palermo, Taormina and the Baroque towns of the south east.

The food is fantastic, great fish and seafood dishes and in the main great value for money. Sicily is also Italy's second largest wine producing region and there are many local grape varieties to try of both white and red wines.

### Palermo

If you fly into Palermo there is a regular half hourly bus service run by Prestia & Comande which stops in the new part of the city then at the main railway station. The new part is the smarter area to stay in but the old historic part is best for the real heart of the city, it is also close to the rail station, the long distance bus station, and the port.

Day tickets for the local buses are good value but have to be bought in advance



from tobacconists and not all sell the 24 hour tickets, beware on Sundays when a lot of these shops are shut.

## Hotels

As usual check the web sites [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com) and [www.hotels.com](http://www.hotels.com) there are lots of B&B's in Sicily but also more recently many self catering apartments.

On our most recent visit we chose an apartment and stayed at Ponticello Apartments, [www.ponticelloapartments.com](http://www.ponticelloapartments.com) which was an excellent choice. There are four apartments in a very central location in the historic part of the city and Christina the host is wonderful with detailed maps and suggestions of eating places, all good. Highly recommended and definitely where we would stay on any future visit.

## Restaurants

Frida, Piazza Sant'Onofrio 37/38, a recommendation from our host and a great one. Only open at night the pizzas are top notch, if you haven't booked you will not normally get a table until after 10.00pm. So good we went twice during our stay and amazing value.

La Galleria, Salita Ramirez 2/4, just behind the cathedral this was a very lucky find, loved the look of the place as we strolled by and went in for lunch which was very good. We were so impressed with the quality and service that we booked dinner



for our last night and it was excellent, top notch in all aspects.

Fud, Piazza Olivella 4/5, another recommendation and we loved it, three visits in our time in Palermo possibly a record for us. First time was lunch with an amazing salad and Onion Potetos, potato wedges with red onions and sun dried tomatoes which are fabulous. Next time for dinner we sampled there meat and cheese platter again very good and on our last visit we tried the burgers and the potatoes (again), knockout ! Great food and service and incredible value.

Bisso Bistrot, Via Macqueda 172A, Quattro Canti, already on the list before our most recent visit and also recommended it does not take bookings, has communal tables and is incredibly popular. We went for dinner the food was good, service variable, we had to ask what the specials were which we both then tried. The house wine is very cheap as is the whole bill but it didn't inspire us to rush back. It is worth a visit for the whole experience.

Obica, Rinascente department store, Piazza San Domenico, we don't usually try department store restaurants but Obia was well known from many years ago in Rome and it's speciality is Buffalo Mozzarella, there was also a roof terrace. To be honest it was difficult to know whether we were in Obica or the main restaurant, there was a lunchtime menu, not initially offered, which was fine. The terrace is lovely but perhaps just for a drink, service not wonderful and felt that



visitors were not quite as well looked after.

Arre Gusto, Via Alessandro Paternostro 59, was a haunt on a previous visit and this time we returned to find a change of name but basically still the same place. Popular for food, we tried the meat and cheese platter, and also for trying some of the wide range of wines. The staff are friendly and helpful.

## Bars

There are many bars offering aperitivi buffets with drinks in the early evening, many around the Teatro Massimo area and the new part of the city has some outstanding wine bars but there are also some good bars of all sorts in the historic part of the city.

Taverna Azurra, Dichese Maccheronai 9/11, in the Vucciria area, is described as a dive bar but has attracted most of the famous visitors to Palermo over the years. It is a great local bar which attracts all sorts, no frills, cheap but good wine and beer and local sweet wines it is stop on all the food tours of the city. Join the locals on a bench in the street, pop up to Salumeria Tini Salvatore up the street for some meat and cheese also try the focaccia from the stall opposite in the evening and enjoy.

St'orto, Discesa dei Giudicin 40, in a small street near Piazza Pretoria we came across this lovely bar which is owned by three local friends with years in the bar and food business. This experience shines



through in the quality of the food and drink on offer and also in it's popularity with a local crowd. Highly recommended.

Bar Garibaldi, Via Alessandro Paternostro 46, a good local bar with some nice outdoor seating. It has an excellent choice of Sicilian wines by the glass at very reasonable prices, it also serves food which we did not try.

Botteghe Colletti, Via Alessandro Paternostro, has a cooler look than Garibaldi and the prices reflect that but it does do a decent aperitivi buffet.

Monkey Pub, Piazza Sant'Anna, a great simple local bar with loads of outdoor seating, live music, friendly staff and very reasonably priced drinks.

Macqueda Bistrot, Via Macqueda 249, we found this on our most recent visit as a refuge from the rain on the first night and we were immediately struck by how friendly the staff were and how good the spritz were. It became a regular stop and the service was always second to none, good cocktails, wine and beer and also the food always looked good.

Enotequa, Via Macqueda 274, this is a lovely looking wine bar but at the top end price wise. It is not the most comfortable place to sit and the service varied depending who was working, most staff were pleasant, there was one staff member one night who unpleasant not to customers but to other staff.

Malox, Piazzetta della Canna, 8/9, not the easiest to find but worth seeking out. This

is one of three bars in this small square which I suspect are very busy later at night than when we visited but definitely one for a return visit.

Enoteca Picone, Via G. Marconi 36, is in the new part of the city and is one of the best known, and oldest, wine bars in the city. It is definitely worth a visit particularly if you were considering buying any bottles to take home or ship.

Enoteca VinoVeritas, Via Sammartino 29, more of a wine shop than a wine bar perhaps but we stopped and enjoyed an excellent glass of wine.

Enoteca Buonvini, Via Dante 8, is more wine bar and restaurant than wine shop and seems very popular although gets some mixed reviews. We enjoyed a good glass of wine from an excellent selection which was well displayed.

The three wine bars above would make an enjoyable evening stroll in a very smart part of the city.

## Drink

Sicily is one of the largest wine producing areas in Italy, best known for the red Nero D'Avola, dark and velvety red, a personal favourite. Catarratto is the most common white grape variety and while used in the past for blending it is becoming more commonly used as a single grape variety, with crisp lemon flavour, also try Grillo and Inzolia. There are also other varieties used in the Aeolian islands which are well worth trying, look for the Colossi label.

## Culture

Go to the markets, see the Quattro Canti, the Cathedral, Piazza Pretoria, it is not a relaxing city but grows on you as you start to find good places to eat and drink.

The Cappella Palatina is a stunning mosaic clad chapel, be prepared to queue but it is well worth the wait.

There are dozens of amazing churches to see but the Chiesa del Gesu, Via del Ponticello is a staggering baroque masterpiece.

The Cattedrale di Monreale is outside the city but easily reached and is on most must see lists.

## Aeolian Islands

These can be reached by Hydrofoil from Milazzo and from June to September by Hydrofoil from Palermo with Ustica Lines, we based ourselves on Lipari the largest and probably the liveliest island and also being in the middle of the group a good place from which to visit other islands

Lipari is lovely, very chilled out with many places to eat and drink and streets to wander through. On our return visit we were amazed by the increase in visitors, many of whom are on the islands for walking holidays.

## Hotels

As usual check the web sites

[www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com) and [www.venere.com](http://www.venere.com),



there now seem to be more choices than when we visited, both hotels and B&B's. Diana Brown B&B and Enzo Il Negro are two of the long standing places and both are fine with simple accommodation.

## Restaurants

L'Angolo del Pesce, Via Vittorio Emanuele 152, the owner has the nearby fish shop and we enjoyed two very good seafood pasta dishes with house wine and complimentary biscotti and liqueurs. Very reasonably priced and popular with locals.

Kasbah, Vico Selinute 43, not the easiest place to find, this seems to be the "cool" place to eat in Lipari and is very popular, there is an indoor part and a large terrace and booking is required for the indoor part, the terrace has the drawback of several stray cats. We had two pasta dishes both good but perhaps too much style over the actual content, the pizzas are apparently excellent.

## Bars & Cafes

Eden Bar, Via Vittorio Emanuele 133, good for a drink and watch the world go by, as is Avant Garde next door.

Bar La Precchia No 191, in the same street has the best aperitivi free snacks with your drinks, incredible value and also snacks at lunch time. The best bar in the main drag for a drink and people watching.

Enolie, Via XXIV Maggio, is just off the Via Vittorio Emanuele and is a lovely small wine bar with a great range of local

wines and also cold meats and cheese. Very generous snacks are given with the wines.

Esseppiu de Vino in Vino, Via Vittorio Emanuele 102 & Via Garibaldi 34, the former on the main street is a small bar with wines, beer and platters of meats & cheeses, the latter is more of a formal dining place, we only tried it for a glass of wine.

Gilberto e Vera on Via Garibaldi 22/24, is probably the best known wine bar and famed for it's selection of panini which are fabulous. There is also a selection of wines and beers as you would expect.

There are loads of bars and cafes at Marina Corta the small harbour and it is a lovely place to sit and have a nightcap.

Fiore de Sale, Via Vittorio Emanuele is a fabulous ice cream shop with a great selection of flavours.

## **Culture**

Island hopping can be difficult to plan as there is sometimes a lack of available information also you may need to use hydrofoils which means you do not get the same views as the ferries. It takes at least three hours to Stromboli by ferry. There are loads of organised trips but you can do it yourself, check out the web sites for Liberty the ferry company. Get your tickets in advance from the office at the port.

Panarea is lovely, this is the very expensive, exclusive island and from there

you have wonderful views of Stromboli

Stromboli is worth a stop, the town is some distance from the port, watch out for the burning black sand.

Salina is the nearest island to Lipari and was quieter than we had expected, one bonus was lunch at Nni Lausta, Via Risorgimento 188, excellent cooking with some twists on traditional dishes.

## **Catania**

Sicity's second city has some great eating, a lively nightlife and many lovely buildings as well as an amazing fish market. It has a good local bus system and the day tickets are very good value.

## **Hotels**

As usual check the web sites

[www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com) and [www.venere.com](http://www.venere.com)

there are numerous places around Via Etna the main thoroughfare and it is a great location for all the major sites.

## **Restaurants**

Trattoria Catania Ruffiana, Via Aloï 50, this is a real locals restaurant but visitors are warmly welcomed and the food is very good with a wide choice of dishes and some very local and traditional pasta choices. The size of the portions is large so sharing a starter can be a wise option, great value for money.

Trattoria Casalinga, Via Biondi 19, another very traditional restaurant with home

cooking style dishes, very friendly service and generous liqueurs on the house at the end.

Mm !!, Piazza Pardo 34, just by the fish market, we only sampled the pasta dishes but it also had some very unusual seafood starters and was packed with locals, a sure sign that it is good.

Trattoria La Paglia, Via Pardo 23, by the fish market this is a great place for lunch, go for the grilled fish and the cheap house wine.

Osteria Antica Marina, Via Pardo 29, at the fish market is very well known and booking is recommended. It is truly a culinary experience, trust the owner and the staff and you will not be disappointed although recent reports indicate prices have increased greatly since our last visit.

## Bars

There are loads of bars round Teatro Massimo but don't look for many being open before 8 o'clock in the evening

Razamataz Wine Bar, Via Montesano 19, this is a really comfortable place to sit and have a drink they also do excellent food, it gets very packed so book or get there early. There are mixed reports about service but we found the staff charming.

Etna Rosso, Via Etnea 260, is a smart modern wine bar with a huge range of wines and outside tables, service can be patchy but it is a great place to sit with a glass of wine.

Perbacco Wine Bar, Via Vasta, this is a smart bar in an area that is packed with bars, it now seems more of a drinks bar as oppose to a wine bar.

Agora Hostel, Bar & Restaurant, Piazza Curro, behind the fish market this hostel has a very good terrace, underground bar and restaurant with a good reputation – very popular with a mixed crowd

## Culture

The buildings round the Duomo Square, Via Crociferi a street of churches outdoing each other, the fish market, and the daily market of Via Etna. You can also visit the nearby seaside towns by local bus.

## Siracusa

This is a gem of a city with loads of lovely B&B's, whatever you do stay on the island part of the city called Ortigia, apart from the archaeological park which is at the far end of the new town everything you would want to see is on Ortigia.

Ortigia is compact enough that you should not need transport but there small buses which run on three routes covering the new part of the city, the train station, bus station, the archaeological park and Ortigia. Information on these is scarce as are the buses but check with the tourist office or at any of the stops, tickets cost 1€.

It is a long journey by rail from or to Palermo but Interbus have a couple of

services a day which only take just over 3 hours, they leave from near the train station and you can buy tickets on line.

## Hotels

As usual check the web sites [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com) and [www.hotels.com](http://www.hotels.com), There are a number of lovely B&B's in Ortigia, one we tried is Viaggiatori, Viandanti E Sognatori, Via Roma 156, a lovely quirky place with a great terrace and excellent bathrooms with good showers.

Palazzo Gilstro, Via Amalfitania 12, is in a great location with beautifully appointed rooms and a lovely roof terrace. Francesca is an excellent host and breakfast is taken at a lovely bar/cafe opposite which has amazing pastries.

## Restaurants

Retrosцена, Via Maestranza 108, is a fairly new addition and is owned and run by a lovely couple, Kiri who runs the front of house is from Greece, her husband the chef is from Siracusa. The food is excellent and the atmosphere lovely, booking is advised at busy times.

Ortigia Fish Bar, Via Maestranza 134, is a small place open for breakfast and lunch every day and for dinner at the weekend. As the name suggests it specialises in fish and seafood, it is soon to move to bigger premises nearby on the waterfront and the current premises will remain as more of a snack bar. Very reasonably priced and

pleasant owners and staff.

Carnizzeraia, Via De Benedicis 29, is one of three or four restaurants at Ortigia Market that seem to have opened since our last visit. The quality of the fish and seafood is outstanding, the prices reasonable and it is incredibly popular, with queues at lunchtime waiting for spaces at the long communal tables.

PerBacco, Via Roma 120, probably wise to book in advance as this is very good cooking and a different menu from some places, it is not cheap but the quality of the food and the service make it well worth the money.

Sicilia in Tavolo, Via Cavour 28, very popular so book in advance, there are two sittings so service can seem slow if they have a number of tables to serve at the same time but the food is worth the wait. The seafood and fish pasta are wonderful and it is great value for money.

Fratelli Burgio, Piazza Cesare Battisti 4, is just by the market in Ortigia and is a grocers and eating place. Wonderful to return and enjoy one of their fantastic platters and also some wild boar bresaola, the wine by the glass is very reasonably priced and the service friendly. Be prepared to wait for a table but so worth it.

Taberna Sveva, Piazza Francesco di Svevia, this is a real locals place so book a table, it is great value for money and has really good cooking. Definitely the place to have some meat after all the fish and seafood, but whatever you have the

quality is excellent. As good on our return as six years previously.

Oinos Restaurant, Via Della Guidecca 69/75, this is fine dining Sicilian style, a very smart place with top notch service and fabulous food. The prices on the wine list are on the high side, but it is still worth a splurge treat.

Ci Voleva, Via Trentino 14, one of a number of restaurants near the market we enjoyed two delicious seafood pasta dishes and excellent service sitting on the terrace. There is very reasonably priced house wine but if you want to go slightly more upmarket you need to choose from inside the restaurant as they have no wine list. Check the prices as some are high end but staff are happy to suggest ones in your price range.

O'Scina, Via D Scina 12, this was recommended by a local and did not disappoint, excellent antipasti and fish & seafood mains were all good, lovely friendly staff. It was not as busy as some places but is slightly hidden away down a very small street. Worth seeking out.

## Bars

Enoteca Solaria, Via Roma 86, a great wine shop and wine bar that also does food. We returned on our most recent visit and although there is a younger couple now in charge the place has not changed. A wonderful wine selection and you can choose a bottle from the shelves and they only add 3 Euros to drink it on the premises, the couple are charming.



Evoo Wine Bar, Via della Maestranza 56, is a recent opening and it is a lovely wine bar to sample local meats, cheeses and wines. A charming owner who is happy to advise on choice if needed.

Cortile Verga, Via della Maestranza 33, was a great find on our most recent visit. A lovely courtyard of tables and a small interior bar, offering wines, cocktails and beer and also food. Great for a nightcap after dinner.

Casina degli Spiriti, Via Dione 40, this narrow street has a couple of craft beer bars but this one has a decent wine selection at very reasonable prices.

SanRocco, Piazzetta San Rocco, is the best bar on the square and very popular, at appertivi time they charge €4 for the buffet but what a selection.

Pub Troubador, just off Piazzetta San Rocco, this is a little gem with very cheap prices for beer, wine and cocktails and also does snacks

Oz Café Borgia, probably the smartest bar in town in a courtyard near the Duomo Square, go early if you want a seat on the terrace, live music later on at night

Vecchio Bar, Via delle Vergini 9, nice little bar, try and get the seats at the window and people watch as the crowds head for Piazzetta San Rocco.

There are loads of bars along Lungonare Alfeo with great sea views, sunset Bar is one of the better ones.

## Culture

As mentioned before the Greek amphitheatre and museum are the main sights but just wandering the streets of Ortigia is a delight and do try and visit the market area.

Noto is one of the baroque gems of this part of Sicily and can easily be visited for a day either by train or bus, the train station is further from the town. The main sites are on the Corso Victor Emmanuelle. Do visit Cafe Sicilia for the legendary ice creams, Anche Gli Angelli, a bar, restaurant and shop in a converted church. Sabinirica is in the main Corso and does amazing panini for lunch, choose your fillings and also enjoy a glass of wine, great food & service.

## Ragusa

Ragusa is a beautiful hill top town in the south east now famous for the character of Inspector Montalbano which is filmed in part in the town. It is definitely worth a couple of days as the setting on two hills with Ragusa Superiore the newer part which has the transport links and Ragusa Ibla the part devastated by an earthquake and rebuilt by the rich who lived there. Ibla is definitely the part to stay in, a maze of narrow streets and old palaces and packed with places to eat and drink.

## Hotels

There are many B&B's but there is one

which deserves special mention, L'Orto Sul Tetto, Via Te. De. Stefano 56. It is minutes walk from the Duomo, the heart of Ragusa Ibla, and is owned by Paolo a native of the town, there are only three rooms and the care and attention is obvious as soon as you step inside. It is beautifully appointed and the roof garden terrace where you have the excellent breakfast is a wonderful place for a glass of wine in the early evening. Bottles of wine and beer available from Paolo's well stocked fridge at bargain prices.

## Restaurants

Duomo, Via Capitano Bocchieri 31 has two Michelin stars and given that it was yards from L'Orto Sul Tetto is seemed only right to try it for the three course set lunch offered at 59 Euros a head including wine. The food was excellent and there were three additional small courses included, the service and food as you would expect was super.

Quatro Gatti, Via Valverde 95 is at the other end of the price range scale, it offers an incredible value four course dinner and while the cooking is simple, the setting and friendly service makes up for any lack of style in the cooking.

Il Barocco, Via Orfanotrofia 27, is a lovely restaurant and the pasta dishes on offer at lunchtime were excellent as was the wine list, not surprising as they own a wonderful wine shop close by.

MAD, Magazzini Dona Fugato, Piazza Polo, is a modern bar, restaurant and boutique

which may initially look as if it is too cool and trendy to produce decent food but the pizzas are excellent as is the appetitive on offer in the early evening.

## Bars

Al Borgo, Piazza Duomo, is a great place to sit and enjoy the view with a beer or a glass of wine, we didn't try the food but lots of people were sampling the wide range of dishes on offer.

MAD, Magazzini Dona Fugato, Piazza Polo, is an excellent place to stop for a drink at appetitive time, they make excellent Spritz with either Aperol or Campari and a good selection of snack food is included in the price.

Gelati Di Vini, Piazza Duomo, is a must for either an ice cream or a glass of wine.

L'Aparthotel Cafe, Piazza Republica, a good place to stop for a refreshment after you have completed the climb down from Ragusa Superiore to Ragusa Ibla.

## Culture

A must is to take the bus from just outside the Giardini in Ibla up to Ragusa Superiore, if you start at the other Duomo square you can then follow a series of flights of stairs down to Ibla while enjoying the amazing views. The tourist office map shows the route and it takes around 20 minutes. Bus tickets are bought in the Tabbachi just by the entrance to the gardens.


The Giardini are well worth a visit, they are

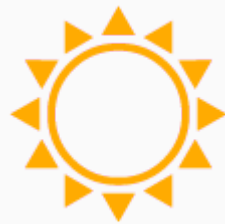
beautifully laid out and contain a couple of churches and a convent, there is also a cafe and restaurant. There are a number of small cafes nearby where you can enjoy a refreshment after your wanderings.

## Seven day forecast for Sicily

Palermo

IT

 2.22 m/s  43 %



24.8°C

 2 m/s  39 %




25.5°C

 1.58 m/s  47 %



25.3°C

 2.02 m/s  53 %

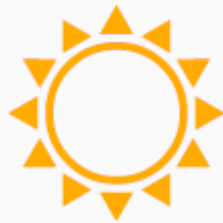


24.5°C

 1.58 m/s  46 %



24.5°C



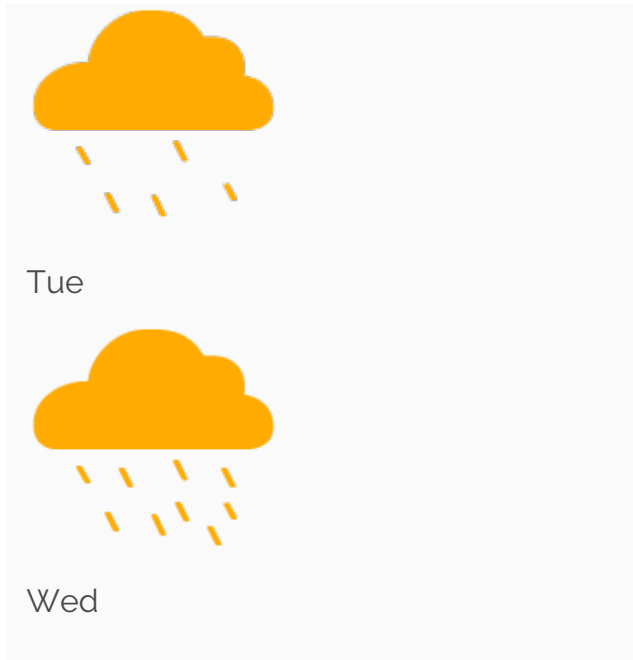
Sat



Sun



Mon



## Last Visited 2018 & Last Updated 2018

