



ASSESSORATO DEL TURISMO, DELLO SPORT E DELLO SPETTACOLO
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Sicily, the Mediterranean on an island: heritage, nature, and contemporary creativity

From UNESCO sites to ancient theaters still hosting performances, from artisan workshops to the smaller islands: Sicily invites international travelers to discover a destination to enjoy all year round

Palermo, July 2026 – A crossroads of the Mediterranean and a meeting point between Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, Sicily is an island of many identities. Greek temples, Roman mosaics, Arab-Norman architecture, and Baroque cities coexist with volcanic landscapes, nature reserves, artisan traditions, and new forms of artistic expression. For international visitors, the region is a destination that brings together culture, nature, gastronomy, and authenticity in a single journey.

Sicily's cultural heritage finds one of its most significant expressions in its **UNESCO**-recognized sites. From the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento to the late-Baroque cities of the Val di Noto, including the Villa Romana del Casale, the archaeological sites of Syracuse and Pantalica, and the Arab-Norman heritage of Palermo, Monreale, and Cefalù, the island tells the story of over three thousand years of history. The natural landscape also takes center stage, featuring Mount Etna—Europe's tallest active volcano—and the Aeolian Islands, an archipelago shaped by fire and the sea.

In Sicily, however, the ancient world is not merely a heritage to be admired: it is a living space. **Ancient theaters** such as those in Syracuse, Taormina, Segesta, and Tindari continue to host performances, concerts, and cultural events. Sitting before a millennia-old stage, with the sea, the hills, or the silhouette of Mount Etna in the background, means taking part in an experience where archaeology and contemporary performance interact seamlessly.

This convergence of eras finds one of its most original expressions in **Gibellina**, the 2026 Italian Capital of Contemporary Art, in western Sicily. Rebuilt after the 1968 Belice earthquake, the city has become an art, architecture, and cultural regeneration lab. Artworks, installations, and urban interventions by Italian and international artists and designers have transformed Gibellina into an open-air museum. Not far away, Alberto Burri's Grande Cretto covers the ruins of the old town with a monumental work of land art, creating a powerful dialogue between memory, the local landscape, and contemporary artistic languages.

Sicilian creativity also thrives in **artisan workshops**. Hand-painted ceramics, coral crafts, textiles, embroidery, jewelry, lava stone objects, and decorated carts all reflect skills passed down through generations. Visiting a workshop allows you to meet the artisans in person, observe the various stages of production, and understand the deep connection between each piece and the region from which it comes.

This same connection characterizes the island's **gastronomy**. Sicilian cuisine is the result of centuries of cultural exchange and uses ingredients deeply rooted in the local landscapes: citrus fruits, almonds, pistachios, extra virgin olive oil, heirloom grains, vegetables, fish, capers, aromatic herbs, and wines from very diverse locations. From the street food of historic markets to the dishes of coastal communities, from traditional pastry shops to experiences at wineries and farms, food offers an immediate window into Sicilian history.

In addition to its cities of art and archaeological sites, Sicily offers a wide range of opportunities for **outdoor tourism**. Hiking on the slopes of Mount Etna, excursions in the Madonie and Nebrodi parks, coastal trails, cycling routes, rock climbing, scuba diving, sailing, and kayaking allow visitors to explore the island at a more leisurely pace. The variety of landscapes and the Mediterranean climate make outdoor experiences enjoyable throughout the year, contributing to a more balanced distribution of tourist flows over the course of the year.

The **smaller islands** further enrich the mosaic of this destination. The Aeolian, Egadi, and Pelagie archipelagos, along with Ustica and Pantelleria, each boast distinct identities, ecosystems, and traditions. Volcanoes, seabeds, fishing villages, terraced fields, hiking trails, and small local communities invite visitors to embark on a more mindful journey—one centered on lingering, connecting with others, and respecting the environmental balance.

Sustainability is, in fact, an increasingly central focus in Sicily's tourism development. The enhancement of hiking trails and nature paths, the restoration of villages, support for local products and crafts, the protection of marine and terrestrial areas, and the promotion of experiences off the beaten path all foster a model of travel capable of generating benefits for host communities. Choosing to visit outside of peak season, using local guides, staying longer, and purchasing locally made products are some of the ways visitors can contribute to the preservation of the island's tangible and intangible heritage.

Sicily is also a prime destination for **film tourism**. Its cities, countryside, coastlines, and historic sites have been chosen as settings for Italian and international film and television productions. The locations featured on screen thus become the starting point for itineraries that lead to the discovery of palaces, squares, villages, and rural landscapes, offering the public a different perspective on the destination and its cultural identity.

From the great landmarks of Mediterranean history to experiences in the inland regions, from ancient theaters to contemporary installations, from urban markets to volcanic trails, Sicily offers a journey rich in connections and contrasts. It is an island to be explored slowly, returning time and again and choosing a different itinerary each time.

Information about the destination

Located in the heart of the Mediterranean, Sicily is the largest Italian island. The region's territory includes historic art cities, archaeological parks, protected natural areas, mountains, volcanoes, coastlines and archipelagos. The destination is connected to major Italian and European cities via the airports of Palermo, Catania, Trapani and Comiso, as well as through ferry connections.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: visitsicily.info - servizio1.turismo@regione.sicilia.it



**UFFICIO STAMPA NAZIONALE
ASSESSORATO DEL TURISMO, DELLO SPORT E DELLO SPETTACOLO
DIPARTIMENTO DEL TURISMO, DELLO SPORT E DELLO SPETTACOLO
REGIONE SICILIANA**

MEDIA CONTACTS: ANGELA MARINI – MARILISA BRUNO - Corso Valdocco 2 C/O Copernico Garibaldi – 10122 Torino
T/F: +39 011 19273572 @: info@openmindconsulting.it - W: www.openmindconsulting.it