

Taormina Archaeological Path

The Ancient Greek-Roman Theatre



Taormina is placed on a hilltop on the eastern shores of Sicily, the city is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities in all of Italy. It's sitting 250 meters above the Ionian Sea and is a popular destination with tourists due to its archaeological relevance.

The Greek Theatre is the second largest of its kind in all of Sicily, only second to the Greek Theatre of Siracusa. It was built in the III century BC during the Hellenic period, it was literally carved out of the rock on Monte Tauro and nowadays it's so incredibly well preserved that it is still used for opera and concerts.

Its shape and design are typical of Greek construction but it was rebuilt during the Roman period probably under the reign of Emperor Augustus, so it's often referred to as Greek-Roman Theatre. The views from the theatre out over the blue Ionian Sea and of Mount Etna, especially on a clear day, are simply spectacular.

Taormina Odeon

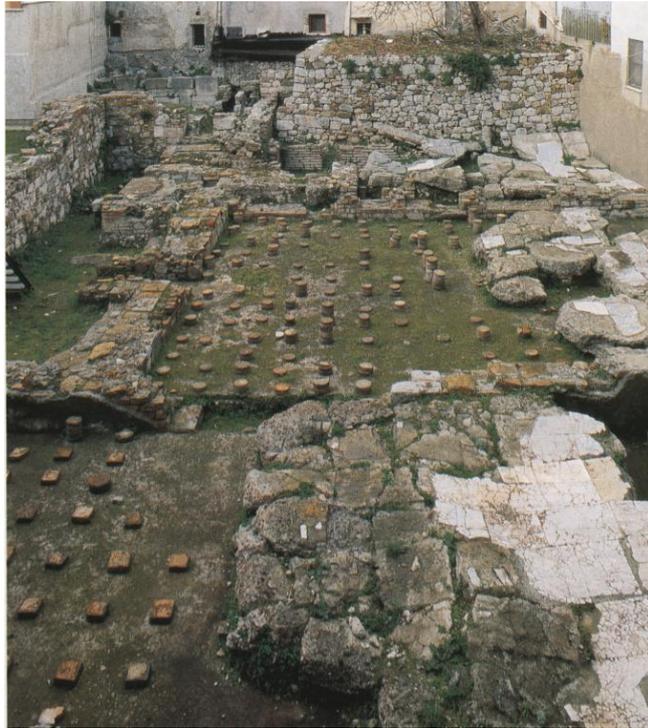


ODEON

The monument is visible near Palazzo Corvaia, behind Santa Caterina's Church. It was discovered at the end of the nineteenth century by the architect Patricolo. The Odeon was used for plays or musical auditions. Built in *opus latericium* with local white limestone blocks probably between the I and the II century. The cavea was excavated in the rock and used by the public, is divided in 3 staircases in 4 wedges made up of 11 orders of terraces. On the top of the cavea we can see the ruins of a gallery made up of vaults which allowed access to the higher steps. The orchestra pit, the space for the actors, was 11 metres in diameter. two areas with vault roofing were on either side of the stage: the north one is visible. The stage was made up of blocks of local white limestone blocks which came from a Greek temple of the Hellenistic period. The temple is situated right under Santa Caterina's church.

The temple originally had six columns on the short sides and twelve on the long sides. Column fragments, or geison, with sculpted leaves and ovules of ionic style are still visible today.

Taormina's Roman thermal baths



The monument is visible behind Vittorio Emanuele's Square, going through the alley on the left of the Congress' Palace but it extends as far as Vico Zecca where we can find the ruins of the walls. The construction of the thermal building, in ancient times was situated on the northern side of the Roman Forum. The building took place during the earlier centuries of the Roman imperial age (end I-II sec. AD). The ruins of a former public building, perhaps a Bouleuterion of Hellenic age, were found below the thermal baths' level through excavations made on the western side of the area.

In this site four pedestals of honorary statues dedicated to prestigious citizens were discovered. They date back to the Hellenic age. Two of these pedestals are visible from the *Antiquarium* of the Greek Theatre. What remains of the Thermal Baths are three big parts, these had the function of *caldaria* or *tepidaria* with floors made of marble warmed by *praefurnia*. The ruins of the columns made of rounded or squared bricks are still visible. Their main aim was to allow warm air circulate beneath the floor. The walls were plaster-coated. Some fragments of the Roman Calendar and a fragment of *Fasti Consulares* with a list of consules are kept in the *Antiquarium* of the Theatre.