

SYRACUSE AND THE ROCKY

NECROPOLIS OF PANTALICA

The site includes two different parts approximately 50 km away from each other.

They are considered a single site by UNESCO because they constitute a unique historical heritage of different Mediterranean cultures. Following its defeat of Athens in 413BC, Syracuse became arguably the most influential city in Magna Graecia. Visitors today can wonder at the archaeological site (whose superb Greek theatre takes pride of place) and the island heart of the town, Ortigia, whose labyrinthine streets weave around ancient ruins, mythological sites and markets before spilling out into the glorious Piazza Duomo, home to a sublime Baroque cathedral built around the columns of a Hellenic Temple of Diana.



ARAB- NORMAN PALERMO AND THE CATHEDRAL CHURCHES OF CEFALÙ AND MONREALE

Unique in the world, Palermo's Arab-Norman architecture has delighted and fascinated art historians for centuries. The Norman domination of Sicily began in 1060 and lasted for over one hundred years.

After vanquishing the Arabs, the Normans opted for a regime of religious and cultural tolerance, embracing many aspects of Arabic life and enlisting North African artists and architects in their building projects. The result was an astonishing fusion of north and south which can be admired in the nine constructions that make up the Heritage Site: the Norman Palace, the Palatine Chapel, the Zisa Palace, the Church of San Giovanni degli Eremiti, the Church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio, the Church of San Cataldo, the Admiral's Bridge (all



in Palermo), and the cathedrals in Palermo, Monreale and Cefalù.

AGRIGENTO AND THE VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES

Founded in the 6th century BC by colonists from Rhodes and Crete, Akragas, as Agrigento was known, soon became a thriving Greek city, whose wealth is manifest in its magnificent religious constructions, including the eight temples built between 510 BC and 430 BC.



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Italy's UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Italy boasts more World Heritage sites than any other country in the world. Its 54 designated cultural and natural landmarks make up over 5% of UNESCO's global list, and another 40 spots are currently up for consideration as possible additions. With all this incredible cultural wealth, we take a look at the most breathtaking heritage sites the country has to offer, and Sicily especially.



*Il Colosseo,
Roma*

Sicily: A UNESCO World Heritage Site island

With its multi-millennial history at the crossroads of the Mediterranean and its unique variety of geological features, Sicily is brimming with man-made and natural wonders. Seven of these have been granted UNESCO World Heritage Site status. Scattered all over the island, Sicily's World Heritage sites highlight the island's diversity and provide a fascinating synopsis of its long history and extraordinary beauty. You might not be able to visit them all in one trip, but we recommend you see at least a few.

VILLA ROMANA DEL CASALE

Situated just outside the historic town of Piazza Armerina in Sicily's hinterland, the 4th century AD Villa Romana del Casale was only fully unearthed in the 20th century. What the archaeologists discovered was simply stunning: around 3500m² of beautifully preserved Roman mosaics depicting Homeric escapades, mythological scenes and portrayals of the Roman owner's daily life, including the famous tableau of bikini-clad girls working out with a medicine ball.



MOUNT ETNA

Mount Etna, Europe's highest active volcano at 3,350m, dominates Sicily's east coast and has literally shaped the area's destiny for around half a million years.



THE LATE BAROQUE TOWNS OF THE VAL DI NOTO

In 1693, a terrible earthquake devastated the southeast of Sicily, flattening towns and killing hundreds. After 1693, entire towns such as **Caltagirone, Militello in Val di Catania, Catania, Modica, Noto, Palazzolo, Ragusa** and **Scieli** were rebuilt in line with the late Baroque style. Today, a visit to the south-east region, to the baroque city of Val di Noto, is an essential stop in a tour of Sicily.



THE AEOLIAN ISLANDS



Emerging from the Tyrrhenian Sea about 30km to the north of Sicily, the Aeolian archipelago's volcanic origins are clear to see. Two of them, Vulcano and Stromboli, are still active. Beautifully limpid waters lap the archipelago's many beaches, panoramic wooded hills entice walkers, sailors delight in variety at their fingertips and food lovers

feast on the freshest of fish and fine local wines.

PUPPET



OPERA

Traditionally the Opera of the Puppets consisted of the theatrical representation of Frankish romantic poems such as *The Song of Roland* or *Orlando furioso*, the performance of medieval clashes between knights and the Moors.

It is a particular type of puppet theatre, which emerged in southern Italy and particularly in Sicily in the early 1800s, is **Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.**

MEDITERRANEAN DIET

The true essence of a place also involves its smells and flavors. Few places on earth can embrace so many fragrances and flavors as Sicily. For this reason the **Mediterranean diet** captures the essence and the most deep synthesis of this island, and symbolizes its quality of life. Not for nothing that the word "diet", from the Greek *diata*, means *way of life*. The Mediterranean diet has become, at the same time, a nutritional example in the world, an ideal model for its beneficial effects on longevity and health. That is why in **November 2010** UNESCO added it to the *List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*.

