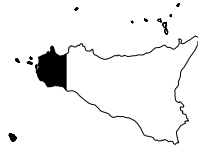


Western Sicily



Western Sicily is ancient and rugged, tranquil and sunny, a fascinating insight into the island's history and culture. It's one of the least touristy parts of the region and if you're wanting an off-the-beaten-track experience with good hotels and fantastic food, head straight here. In fact, it could be said without much exaggeration that this is Sicily's prime gourmet area and, with endless fields of Marsala grapes covering the landscape, oenophiles will spend a lot of time in local wine bars.

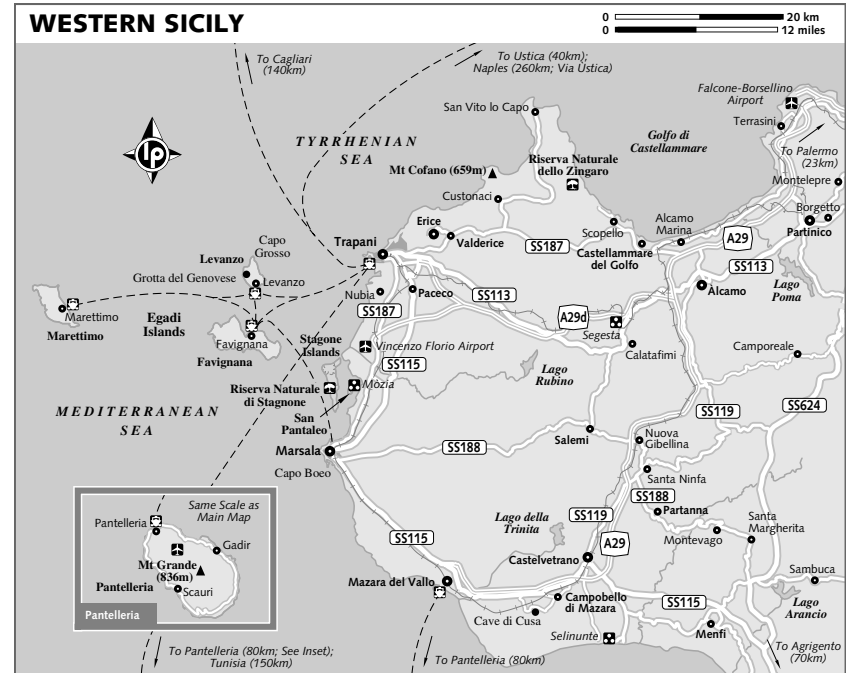
Though they are irresistible, gastronomic pleasures are not the only highlight of western Sicily – the beautiful coastline is absolutely mesmerising, as are the region's towns. The Riserva Naturale dello Zingaro, Sicily's first nature reserve, is distinguished by coves and rocky beaches washed by the clearest of waters, while offshore Pantelleria and the Egadi Islands hold some 15,000 years of history between them. Trapani, Marsala and Mazara del Vallo are charming, with labyrinthine old quarters sprinkled with gorgeous palazzi and churches.

Historically, the area's roots are firmly in North Africa: the features and physiognomy of the fishermen are almost indistinguishable from the Tunisian immigrants who fill the ports in Trapani and Mazara del Vallo.

For decades, western Sicily was written off as a remote and uninteresting corner of the island, with little to recommend it save a couple of Greek ruins and – for those fascinated by the macabre – its reputation as a hot spot of seismic instability and Mafia activity. Consequently, the area never developed the mass tourist industry of Taormina and Syracuse, but it's been far better off for it.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Feast on fish couscous or tuck into some delicious *pasta alla Trapanese* in **Trapani** (p105)
- Wander through the narrow streets of La Casbah in **Mazara del Vallo** (p124)
- Be mesmerised by the medieval streets of **Erice** (p110) while you fatten up on some fabulous *cannoli* (pastry shells stuffed with sweet ricotta)
- Taste the famed sweet Marsala wine in one of the *enoteche* (wine bars) in **Marsala** (p120)
- Swim, snorkel and island-hop through the **Egadi Islands** (p113)



GOLFO DI CASTELLAMMARE

CASTELLAMMARE DEL GOLFO

pop 14,600

The stunning promontory between Castellammare del Golfo and Monte Cofano (659m) has to be perhaps the most beautiful in all of Sicily, and at its heart lies the fishing village of Castellammare del Golfo. Although it's the least attractive town along the gulf, this place acts as a transport hub. It does have a pleasant harbour that is overlooked by the remains of a 17th-century castle and surrounded by sandy beaches, the best of which is the wide stretch of sand at the lovely **Alcamo Marina**.

Sleeping & Eating

Castellammare del Golfo is a resort town with large hotels catering mainly to Italian families. Two of the best are the **Al Madarig** (☎ 0924 3 35 33; www.almadarig.com; Piazza Petrolo; s €52-82, d €80-124; 🚰), on the harbourfront, and

the big, modern **Punta Nord Est** (☎ 0924 3 05 11; www.puntanordest.com; Via Leonardo da Vinci 67; s €50-78, d €78-112; 🚰 🚰), with a seafood location.

You'll find good camping facilities at **Nausicaa** (☎ 0924 3 30 30; www.nausicaa-camping.it; Località Forgia; per person €6-9, camp site €12-20). It is well signposted on roads approaching Castellammare del Golfo.

The **Ristorante del Golfo** (☎ 0924 3 02 57; Via Segesta 153; meals €35-40; 🚫 closed Tue) has a Slow Food Movement recommendation, and you can get great seasonal dishes in an elegant setting. Try the excellent fish and seafood, fresh pasta and, in colder months, delicious beans and lentils. You can have your *dolci* (dessert) here, or stroll down to **Gelateria Tropical** (Via Umberto I, 2; sweets from €2-5) for some creamy *semifreddo* (literally 'semifrozen'; a cold, creamy dessert), *cannoli* (pastry shells stuffed with sweet ricotta) and, of course, *gelato* (ice cream).

Getting There & Away

In Castellammare del Golfo buses depart from Via della Repubblica, in the upper part of town. Azienda Siciliana Trasporti (AST) runs a regular service to Trapani (€3.10, eight daily

Monday to Saturday); there's also a Sunday service from June to September. **Russo** (☎ 0924 3 13 64; www.russoautoservizi.it) runs services to Piazza Marina in Palermo (€4.70, nine daily Monday to Saturday, three Sunday), as well as services to Scopello (€1.80, 30 minutes) at 7.10am, 9am, 1.30pm and 4.15pm.

The train station in Castellammare is an inconvenient 3km out of town, although a shuttle bus (€1.40) takes passengers into town. There are frequent trains from Palermo (€4.25, 1½ hours, 13 daily) and Trapani (€3.45, 50 minutes, five daily).

SCOPELLO

The gorgeous Scopello is a two-streets-and-a-square village that couldn't be any more charming if it tried. Built around a *baglio* (manor house) that overlooks the *tonnara* (tuna-processing plant) on the beach below, its white houses and smooth-stone streets feel like they belong in a 1950s Italian movie.

This is pure holiday material, so there's nothing to do except swim by the *tonnara* in one of the most idyllic coves on the island. The place is gorgeous, though somewhat hard on the bum: the abandoned *tonnara* (which only ceased operations in the 1980s, having been in operation since the 1200s) is surrounded by rows of rusting anchors, and the raised stone platform, filled with sun seekers, is lapped by waters of an incredible blue. The cove is protected by rock towers jutting out of the sea. It's a 20-minute (1.5km) walk from the village.

If you prefer a quieter beach, head to the Riserva Naturale dello Zingaro; it's a 2km walk from Scopello, or you can take the bus that heads there at 9am from the village bus stop.

Try to avoid the village in August, when it becomes seriously busy.

If you need a bank, there's a small branch of Banco di Sicilia with an ATM at the *baglio*.

Sleeping & Eating

Considering its size, there is a surprising number of rooms in Scopello; for more accommodation options, check out www.scopellonline.com. Always book in advance. Scopello's eating options are pretty good, and all have gorgeous settings.

Maria (☎ 0924 54 12 16; www.bedandbreakfastmaria.com; Piazza Nettuno 3; d €45; ☺) In a beautiful old house right on the village square, Maria's rooms are airy and comfortable, with

traditional décor. You can use the kitchen, and there's a pleasant common area with a TV.

Hotel-Ristorante Torre Bennistra (☎/fax 0924 54 11 28; www.hoteltorrebennistra.com; Via Natale di Roma 19; s €60-110, d €70-150; ☺ ☺ ☺) This hotel has newly renovated rooms that are elegant and comfortable, and a restaurant (meals €25 to €35) with wonderful food, sea views and an excellent wine list with offerings from local vineyards.

La Tavernetta (☎/fax 0924 3 26 60; www.albergo tavernetta.it; Via Armando Diaz 3; r per person €48-80; ☺) This traditional Scopello house has lovely ochre-coloured rooms with balconies and comfy beds. La Tavernetta also has one of the village's more popular restaurants (meals €25 to €30), serving good fish and seafood indoors or on the little terrace.

Ristorante La Terrazza (☎ 0924 54 11 98; Via Marco Polo 5; meals €25-35) This is the best place to enjoy soaring views down the 106m ridge to the famous cove. The restaurant is elegant, and the service efficient and friendly. Try the excellent mussels in a slightly spicy tomato sauce for a starter, move on to *pasta alle vongole* (pasta with clams), and sink your teeth into a freshly grilled *pesce spada* (swordfish), all with some chilled white wine.

Getting There & Away

There are **Russo** (☎ 0924 3 13 64; www.russoautoservizi.it) buses from Castellammare del Golfo to Scopello (€1.80, 30 minutes) at 7.10am, 9am, 1.30pm and 4.15pm; the 9am bus takes you to Riserva Naturale dello Zingaro (€1.30, 20 minutes) before it reaches Scopello.

Buses to Castellammare del Golfo (€1.80, 30 minutes) depart from the fountain in Scopello at 7.40am, 9.30am, 2pm and 4.45pm.

RISERVA NATURALE DELLO ZINGARO

Saved from development and road projects by local protests, the tranquil **Riserva Naturale dello Zingaro** (☎ 0923 2 61 11; www.riservazingaro.it in Italian; adult/child €3/2; ☺ 7am-9pm Apr-Sep, 8am-4pm Oct-Mar) is the star attraction on the gulf.

Sicily's, and Italy's, first nature reserve, Zingaro was created with the support of local people and ecologists. Now its wild coastline is a haven for the rare Bonelli eagle, along with 40 other bird species and 700 plant varieties, some unique to this stretch of coast. Mediterranean flora dusts the hillsides with wild carob and bright yellow euphorbia, and hidden coves, such as Marinella Bay, provide excellent swimming spots. **Cetaria Diving Centre**

(☎ 0924 54 10 73; www.cetaria.com; Via Marco Polo 3) in Scopello organises dives and underwater tours of the nature reserve from Scopello's *tonnara* in summer.

The main entrance to the park is 2km from Scopello. A walk up the coast between the San Vito lo Capo and Scopello entrances will take about four hours along a clearly marked track (note that the San Vito entrance is 20km from the town of San Vito lo Capo and there is no public transport). There are also several trails inland, which are detailed on the free maps available at the information offices at the park's two entrances. You can also download these from the helpful website, which has lots of good information about the park.

A car is the best way to get to Scopello from Castellammare del Golfo. If you're driving from Trapani, take the SS187. Russo buses run from Scopello (€1.40, 20 minutes, four daily).

SAN VITO LO CAPO

pop 3500

Occupying the tip of the promontory is the seaside town of San Vito lo Capo, full of beachcombers and sun worshippers in summer but virtually dead in winter. The town is renowned for its splendid beach (at the end of Via Savoia) and for its fish couscous, celebrated in the **Festival Internazionale del Cuscu** every September. The most noteworthy sight is the fortresslike 13th-century **Chiesa di San Vito**, about halfway down Via Savoia.

Information

The **tourist office** (☎ 0923 97 24 64; Via Savoia 57) is located in the rather uninteresting Museo del Mare. There's an **internet point** (Via di Bella 17; per hr €6) with around 10 computers, plus telephone and fax services; it's off the main street.

Sleeping & Eating

There are heaps of hotels, B&Bs and restaurants in San Vito but they are heaving July through September.

El Bahira (☎ 0923 97 25 77; www.elbahira.it; Località Makari; per person €5.70-7, camp site €13.50-18.50) This is a good camping ground, 3km south of San Vito lo Capo, with tents shaded by tall eucalyptus trees. There are also apartments for rent (€320 to €990 per week). It's well signposted; ask the bus driver to let you off if you're not coming by car.

our pick Chiedi La Luna (☎ 0923 62 14 01; www.chiedi-la-luna.it; Via Santuario 37b; s €45-70, d €60-110; ☺ closed Nov-Mar; ☺) The best option in San Vito, this bright little B&B has a cosy atmosphere, terracotta-coloured walls, dark wooden furniture and six rooms with big comfy beds and large windows. Breakfast is served in a pleasant communal area, and the owner speaks English.

Albergo del Corso (☎ 0923 97 28 00; www.albergo delcorso.it; Via Savoia 25; s €55-65, d €75-160; ☺ closed Nov, Jan & Feb; ☺) Right on the main drag and perfect for the beach, this no-frills place has 11 rooms that are clean and bright; two come with a terrace. Better value in the lower season.

Capo San Vito (☎ 0923 97 21 22; www.caposanvito.it; s €117-180, d €130-200; ☺) This plush hotel has its own private beach, and classy rooms with an understated Moorish theme. The hotel comes complete with its own wellness centre, so it's a perfect location for splashing out.

Thaam (☎ 0923 97 28 36; www.sanvitoweb.com/thaam in Italian; Via Duca degli Abruzzi 34; meals €35-40; ☺ closed Wed Nov) This North African-themed restaurant dishes up its famous fish and chicken couscous beneath tented canopies.

Via Savoia is full of pizzerie and cheap *rosticcerie* (shops selling roast meat and other prepared food). If you fancy some fun, check out **Habana** (☎ 320 85 36 971; Via Piano di Sopra 5), which hosts parties during the summer months – some people even bring their kids!

Getting There & Away

AST Buses serve San Vito lo Capo (€3.25, 1½ hours, eight daily Monday to Saturday, four Sunday) from Trapani. Buses arrive at Via P Matarella, just near the beach and parallel to Via Savoia.

TRAPANI & AROUND

TRAPANI

pop 68,400

The capital of the eponymous province is quiet even in the heights of Sicily's August tourist invasion, which means you can explore its beautiful old quarter at your own pace. Trapani's streets are laden with elegant baroque palazzi (palaces or mansions) and impressive churches, and the

town's good hotels and restaurants make it an excellent base from which to explore the whole northwest.

Hugging the precious harbour where Peter of Aragon landed in 1282 to begin the Spanish occupation of Sicily, the sickle-shaped spit of land that is Trapani once sat at the heart of a powerful trading network that stretched from Carthage to Venice. Traditionally the town thrived on coral and tuna fishing, salt and wine production, and a healthy injection of Mafia-laundered money; today, arriving in Trapani through extensive and unattractive suburbs, one gets a glimpse of the unbridled, and usually illegal, construction of the last few decades.

Trapani is the main embarkation point for the Egadi archipelago and the remote Moorish island of Pantelleria.

Orientation

Trapani is narrow and relatively compact, bordered on either side by the sea. The main street, Via GB Fardella, runs east-west, splitting the modern city into two neat halves. On either side a chessboard street grid dominates as far as the historic centre, which is a confusing maze of small streets, many of which do not have signposts. All of the sights of interest are concentrated in this area, from where there is also access to the ferry terminal. The main bus station is on Piazza Montalto, in the new town, and the train station is around the corner on Piazza Umberto I.

Information

EMERGENCY DOCTOR

Emergency Doctor (☎ 0923 2 96 29; Piazza Generale Scio 1; ☎ 24hr)

Police (questura; ☎ 0923 59 81 11; Piazza Vittoria Veneto; ☎ 24hr)

INTERNET ACCESS

World Sport Line (Via Regina Elena 26-28; per hr €6; ☎ 10.30am-1pm & 4-8pm Mon-Sat) Three computers and fast connection.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Ospedale Sant'Antonio Abate (☎ 0923 80 91 11, casualty 0923 80 94 50; Via Cosenza; ☎ 24hr)

MONEY

There are dozens of banks in Trapani and nearly all of them have ATMs.

POST

Main post office (Piazza Vittoria Veneto; ☎ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Sat)

TELEPHONE

Public telephone booths are dotted around town, and there are quite a few in front of the ferry terminal. The terminal also has a phone centre on the 1st floor.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist office (☎ 0923 2 90 00; www.apr.trapani.it in Italian; Piazza Garibaldi; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun) A well-organised and friendly tourist office with bags of information on the province and a good town map. It provides free audio guides for Trapani's sights.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Egators (☎ 0923 2 17 54; Via Ammiraglio Staiti 13) For bus and ferry tickets.

Salvo Viaggi (☎ 0923 54 54 55; Corso Italia 48) For boat and air tickets to Pantelleria.

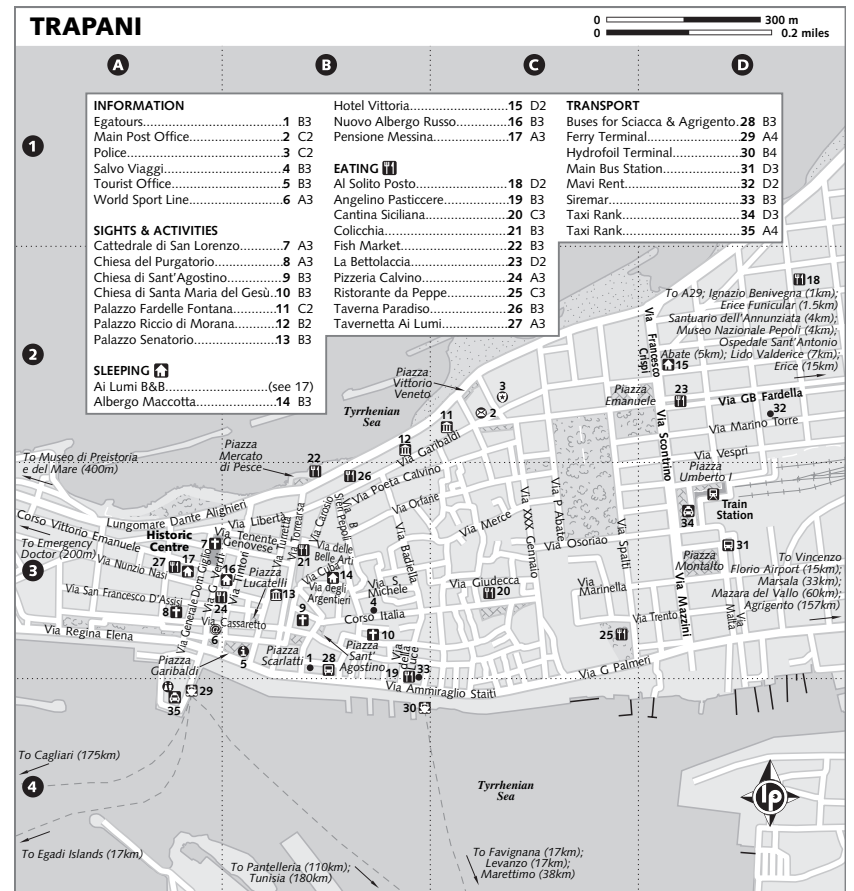
Sights

Although the narrow network of streets in Trapani's historic centre is Moorish, the city takes most of its character from the fabulous 18th-century baroque of the Spanish period. A catalogue of examples can be found down the pedestrian Via Garibaldi, most notably the **Palazzo Riccio di Morana** and **Palazzo Fardelle Fontana**. The best time to walk down here is in the early evening, when the *passaggiata* (stroll) is in full swing.

Another busy place at *passaggiata* is Corso Vittorio Emanuele, which is punctuated by the huge **Cattedrale di San Lorenzo** (Corso Vittorio Emanuele; admission free; ☎ 8am-4pm), with its baroque façade and iced Christmas cake-style stuccoed interior. Facing off the east end of Vittorio Emanuele is another baroque confession, the **Palazzo Senatorio**.

Off Vittorio Emanuele, south along Via Generale Dom Giglio, is the **Chiesa del Purgatorio** (☎ 0923 56 28 82; Via San Francesco D'Assisi; admission free; ☎ 4-6.30pm), which houses the 18th-century *Misteri* – 20 life-sized wooden figures depicting the story of Christ's Passion. On Good Friday they are carried in procession (see p108).

Further west, on Piazzetta Saturno, is the 14th-century **Chiesa di Sant'Agostino** (Piazzetta Saturno; admission free; ☎ 8am-1pm), its austerity relieved only by its fine Gothic rose window



INFORMATION

Egators	1	B3
Main Post Office	2	C2
Police	3	C2
Salvo Viaggi	4	B3
Tourist Office	5	B3
World Sport Line	6	A3

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Cattedrale di San Lorenzo	7	A3
Chiesa del Purgatorio	8	A3
Chiesa di Sant'Agostino	9	B3
Chiesa di Santa Maria del Gesù	10	B3
Palazzo Riccio di Morana	11	C2
Palazzo Senatorio	12	B3
Palazzo Senatorio	13	B3

SLEEPING

Ai Lumi B&B	(see 17)	
Albergo Maccotta	14	B3

Hotel Vittoria

Hotel Vittoria	15	D2
Nuovo Albergo Russo	16	B3
Pensione Messina	17	A3

EATING

Al Solito Posto	18	D2
Angolino Pasticcere	19	B3
Cantina Siciliana	20	C3
Colicchia	21	B3
Fish Market	22	B3
La Bettolaccia	23	D2
Pizzeria Calvino	24	A3
Ristorante da Peppe	25	C3
Taverna Paradiso	26	B3
Tavernetta Ai Lumi	27	A3

TRANSPORT

Buses for Sciacca & Agrigento	28	B3
Ferry Terminal	29	A4
Hydrofoil Terminal	30	B4
Main Bus Station	31	D3
Mavi Rent	32	D2
Siremar	33	B3
Taxi Rank	34	D3
Taxi Rank	35	A4

and portal. Nearby stands something altogether more ornate, the Catalan-Gothic **Chiesa di Santa Maria del Gesù** (Via San Pietro; admission free; ☎ 8am-1pm), which houses the exquisite **Madonna degli Angeli** (Madonna of the Angels), a glazed terracotta statue by Andrea della Robbia.

Trapani's major sight is the 14th-century **Santuario dell'Annunziata** (Via Conte Agostino Pepoli 179; admission free; ☎ 8am-noon & 4-7pm), some way from the centre on Via Agostino Pepoli. Remodelled in baroque style in the 17th century, it retains its original Gothic rose window and doorway. The Cappella della Madonna, behind the high altar, contains the venerated **Madonna di Trapani**, thought to be carved by Nino Pisano.

Next to the Santuario dell'Annunziata, in a former Carmelite monastery, is the **Museo Nazionale Pepoli** (☎ 0923 55 32 69; Via Conte Agostino Pepoli 200; admission free; ☎ 9am-1.30pm Tue-Sat, 9am-12.30pm Sun). It houses the collection of Conte Pepoli, who made it his business to salvage much of Trapani's local arts and crafts, not least the garish coral carvings that were all the rage in Europe before the banks of coral off Trapani and San Vito lo Capo were decimated. The museum also has a respectable collection of sculptures by Antonello and Domenico Gagini, silverwork, archaeological artefacts and religious artwork.

Trapani's other museum is the **Museo di Preistoria e del Mare** (☎ 0923 54 79 22; Via Torre di Ligny; admission €1.50; ☎ 9.30am-1pm & 4.30-7.30pm), located

I MISTERI

Sicily's most venerated Easter procession is a four-day festival of extraordinary religious fervour. Since the 17th century, the citizens of Trapani – represented by 20 traditional *maestranze*, or guilds – begin the celebration of the Passion of Christ on the Tuesday before Easter Sunday with the first procession of a remarkable, life-sized wooden statue of the Virgin Mary. Over the course of the next three days, nightly processions of the remaining *Misteri* (life-sized wooden statues) make their way through the old quarter and port to a specially erected chapel in Piazza Lucatelli, where the icons are stored overnight. Each procession is accompanied by women following the men (who carry the statues on their shoulders) and a local band, which plays dirges to the slow, steady beat of a drum.

The high point of the celebration is on Friday afternoon, when the 20 guilds emerge from the Chiesa del Purgatorio and descend the steps of the church, carrying each of the statues, to begin the 1km-long procession up to Via GB Fardella; the procession then returns to the church the following morning. The massive crowds that gather to witness the slow march often reach a peak of delirious fervour that is matched only by that which accompanies the Easter *pasos* celebration in Seville, Spain. If you're not around for Easter, you can always see the figures in Chiesa del Purgatorio (p106), where they are stored throughout the year. A guardian is usually on hand to explain the origins of each one.

at the tip of the promontory in the Spanish fortress Torre di Ligny. It houses a collection of prehistoric artefacts and medieval objects recovered from shipwrecks off the coast. From the top of the tower there are great views over the town. Highlights are Titian's *San Francesco con Stigmata* (St Francis with Stigmata) and the *Pietà* by Roberto di Oderiso.

Festivals & Events

Trapani is famous throughout Italy for its Easter celebration, the **Procession of the Misteri**. It begins on the Tuesday before Easter and reaches its climax on the night between Holy Thursday and Good Friday. See above for more information.

Sleeping

Trapani has a good choice of small hotels and *pensioni* (guesthouses), with the best options in the historic town centre.

Lido Valderice (☎ 0923 57 30 86; www.campinglidovalderice.com; Via del Dentice 15, Località Tonnara di Bonagia; per person/camp site €5/10; 🚻 1 Jun–30 Sep) Located 7km north of Trapani on a shale beach, this is the nearest camping ground to the town and it's pretty good. There are six buses daily that head past here for Erice.

Pensione Messina (☎ 0923 2 11 98; Corso Vittorio Emanuele 71; s with shared bathroom €20, d with shared bathroom €35–40) The basic, grandma-style rooms at Trapani's cheapest sleeping option all share bathrooms; it's very central and a real insight into 1950s Italy. Breakfast is an extra €4 per

person. The *pensione* shares a courtyard with Ai Lumi B&B.

ourpick Albergo Maccotta (☎ 0923 2 84 18; albergomaccotta@comet.it; Via degli Argentieri 4; s €30–35, d €55–65; 🚻) The Maccotta is excellent value, with neat sunflower-coloured rooms decorated with Paul Gauguin prints.

Nuovo Albergo Russo (☎ 0923 2 21 66; fax 0923 2 66 23; Via Tintori 4; s €40–45, d €70–85; 🚻) With gilded antiques in the lobby and a classic 1950s vibe, Nuovo Albergo has an eccentric air and a charming owner. Once the best accommodation option in Trapani, it has decayed significantly, and the slow renovations that are taking place are warmly welcomed.

ourpick Ai Lumi B&B (☎ 0923 87 24 18; www.ailumi.it; Corso Vittorio Emanuele 71; s €50–70, d €80–100, 4-person apt €130–150; 🚻) Situated right on the main drag, this lovely 18th-century palazzo is surrounded by swirling baroque architecture. Some of the stylishly decorated rooms have four-poster beds, and the small apartments are well furnished and spacious. There's wi-fi access, and guests receive a 15% discount at the Tavernetta Ai Lumi (opposite), next door, where the expansive buffet breakfast is served. Francesca speaks impeccable English.

Hotel Vittoria (☎ 0923 87 30 44; www.hotelvittoria.trapani.it; Via Francesco Crispi 4; s/d €60/95; 🚻) With a total of 65 rooms, Hotel Vittoria is the biggest hotel in the historic centre. All the rooms are comfortable and modern, with big bathrooms, but the hotel does lack the character of some of the smaller sleeping options.

Eating RESTAURANTS

Sicily's Arab heritage and Trapani's unique position on the sea route to Tunisia has made couscous (or *cuscus*, as they spell it here) something of a speciality, particularly when served with a fish sauce (*cuscus con pesce*) that includes tomatoes, garlic and parsley. Another irresistible staple is *pesto alla Trapanese* (pesto made from fresh tomatoes, basil, garlic and almonds), eaten with *busiate*, a small pasta that is hand-twirled in Trapani. Make sure you try both dishes – you'll find them on the menu of every restaurant in town. You'll need to book in advance on weekend evenings in most places.

Ristorante da Pepe (☎ 0923 2 82 46; Via Spalti 50; meals €20–25; 🚻 closed Mon) Lots of stained glass, steaming pasta and fresh seafood. Try the tuna specialities from May to early July.

Tavernetta Ai Lumi (☎ 0923 87 24 18; Corso Vittorio Emanuele 15; meals €25–35; 🚻 closed Sun) Converted from the stable block of an 18th-century palazzo, this traditional tavern is rustic to the core. Exposed brickwork and huge arches lend the dining room great character, and the menu is full of unpretentious country fare.

ourpick Cantina Siciliana (☎ 0923 2 86 73; Via Giudecca 52; meals €25–35) This little trattoria (informal restaurant) is a gastronomic paradise. You'll have to seek it out in the old Jewish ghetto, where scaffolding prevents the alley from collapsing in on itself, but you'll be discovering one of the finest places to eat in the whole of Sicily. It's no wonder it sports the Slow Food Movement badge of approval – just taste the sardine in breadcrumbs for starters, a plate of mind-blowing *pasta alla Trapanese* and the fish platter, followed by a warm *cassatella* (cream horn stuffed with sweet ricotta) or Italy's most famous muscat, the passito di Pantelleria. The restaurant runs the superb *enoteca* (wine bar or shop) next door.

ourpick Al Solito Posto (☎ 0923 2 45 45; Via Orlandini 30a; meals €30–35; 🚻 closed Sun & 15–31 Aug) Tucked at the end of Via Orlandini, this tiny trattoria is another deserved wearer of the Slow Food Movement badge. It's all about fish and seafood here, with an emphasis on the freshest picks of the morning catch. Start with the fish *carpaccio* (thinly sliced fish) and proceed to the delicious *spaghetti con i ricci* (spaghetti with sea urchin meat), which is perfectly followed by a tuna steak covered

with sweet caramelised onions. If you can fit in a dessert, try the almond parfait or a creamy *cannoli*.

ourpick La Bettolaccia (☎ 0923 2 16 95; Via GB Fardella 23; meals €30–40; 🚻 closed Sat lunch & Sun) This is a great place to try couscous, prepared here with fish *alla Trapanese* (with garlic, chilli, tomatoes, saffron, cinnamon and nutmeg), a spicy and delightful local speciality. Another excellent *primo piatto* is the *trenette* (short pasta) with prawns and pistachio sauce. Move onto grilled fish or stuffed squid, and finish with ice cream or a *cassata* (sponge cake filled with sweetened ricotta, diced chocolate and candied fruit). No wonder the Slow Food Movement loves the place.

Taverna Paradiso (☎ 0923 87 37 51; Lungomare Dante Alighieri 24; meals €35–40; 🚻 closed Jan) Taverna Paradiso serves up good food in a buzzing atmosphere by the seafloor. The couscous is plentiful, the fish fresh, there's a good choice of salads, and the service is friendly and multilingual. The clientele stems from the higher levels of Trapani society, so you should dress relatively smartly.

The town's favourite takeaway pizza place is **Pizzeria Calvino** (☎ 0923 2 14 64; Via N Nasi 77; pizzas €3.50–7; 🚻 7pm–midnight Wed–Mon).

CAFÉS

ourpick Colicchia (cnr Via delle Belle Arti & Via Carosio; granitas €1.55) The *granita* (flavoured crushed ice) here is the best in Trapani. Many flavours are available, including old favourites such as *mandorla* (almond), coffee and *limone* (lemon), but you should also try the seasonal delicacies, such as *gelsi* (mulberry), which is only eaten from July to September.

Angelino Pasticcere (☎ 0923 2 80 64; Via Ammiraglio Staiti 87; cakes €2.50–3.50) This heavenly little café serves excellent *cannoli* and a good array of light savoury meals. Located opposite the hydrofoil dock, it is a great place to pick up a snack before heading off to the islands.

Ignazio Benivegna (☎ 0923 55 55 54; Via Manzoni 99; ice creams & cakes €2.50–3.50) An old-timer among Trapani's *pasticcerie* (pastry shops), this place has been providing tasty *cannoli*, *cassate* and other delicious cakes since 1939. It's a bit of a walk down towards the Erice funicular.

SELF-CATERING

There's a great open-air **fish market** (Piazza Mercato di Pesce; 🚻 morning–early afternoon Mon–Sat) on the northern waterfront. Even if you're not buying

seafood, it's a great place to stroll around and take in the sights, smells and sounds.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Trapani's small national airport, **Vincenzo Florio airport** (☎ 0923 84 25 02), is 15km south of town at Birgi. Flights serve Dublin, Rome, Tunis and Pantelleria; see p300 for details.

See right for information on getting to/from the airport.

BOAT

Trapani's **ferry terminal** (☎ 0923 54 54 11) is opposite Piazza Garibaldi. Inside you will find a money exchange, Tirrenia and Siremar ticket offices, a café, clean toilets and phone facilities.

For hydrofoils you will need to head down Via Ammiraglio Staiti. Hydrofoils run every hour and a half from 7am until around 8pm in the high season.

Siremar (☎ 0923 54 54 55; www.siremar.it in Italian; Via Ammiraglio Staiti 61) runs hydrofoils to Favignana (€5.30, 20 minutes), Levanzo (€5.30, 35 minutes) and Marettimo (€11.80, one hour). It also runs a daily ferry to Pantelleria (€30, five hours) at midnight June to September; it runs Sunday to Friday through the rest of the year.

Ustica Lines (☎ 0923 2 22 00; www.usticalines.it in Italian; Via Ammiraglio Staiti 23) runs regular hydrofoils to Favignana, Levanzo and Marettimo for similar prices to Siremar, as well as a summer-only service to Ustica (€19, 2½ hours, four weekly), Naples (€83, five hours, four weekly) and Pantelleria (€34, 2½ hours, one daily). Ustica Lines also runs ferries to Tunisia (€72 to €144, nine hours) on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. Get tickets at Egatours (p106), or you can buy directly at the hydrofoil terminal.

Tirrenia (☎ 0923 52 18 96; www.tirrenia.it) runs a ferry service to Cagliari on Sardinia (seat/bed €38/52, 11½ hours, one weekly). Purchase tickets at Salvo Viaggi (p106) or from the ferry terminal.

BUS

All intercity buses arrive and depart from the **main bus station** (Piazza Montalto). Tickets can be bought from kiosks in the station.

Segesta (☎ 0923 2 17 54) runs express buses connecting Trapani with Palermo (€8, two hours, eight daily). **AST** (☎ 0923 2 32 22) serves

Erice (€1.80, 45 minutes, 10 daily Monday to Saturday, four Sunday), San Vito lo Capo (€3.50, 1½ hours, eight daily Monday to Friday), Marsala (€3, 30 minutes, eight daily Monday to Friday) and Mazara del Vallo (€4.40, 1½ hours, three daily). Autoservizi Tarantola runs a service to Segesta (€3, 25 minutes, five daily June to September).

Lumia (☎ 0923 2 17 54) has services to Agrigento (€10, four hours, three daily Monday to Saturday, one Sunday) and Sciacca (€7.50, two hours, two daily). You can pick up these buses outside Egatours (p106), where you purchase the tickets.

Services decrease dramatically on Sundays, public holidays and in the low season (October to May). Timetables are always posted at the bus station, or you can get copies at the tourist office.

TRAIN

Trapani is linked to Palermo (€7, 2½ hours, 10 to 12 daily), Castelvetrano (€4.50, one hour 10 minutes, 20 daily), Marsala (€3, 30 minutes, 20 daily) and Mazara del Vallo (€4, 50 minutes, 20 daily).

Getting Around

AST buses (€3.50, 20 minutes) leave for the Vincenzo Florio airport from the main bus station on Piazza Montalto to coincide with flights. **Segesta** (☎ 0923 2 17 54) has buses to Palermo's Falcone-Borsellino airport (€5.50, one hour and 10 minutes, two daily Monday to Saturday).

You can hire bicycles from Albergo Maccotta (p108) for €5 per day.

Bus 11 does a free circular trip through Trapani from the town centre to the Museo Nazionale Pepoli, leaving from the bus station and stopping at the train station on the return leg.

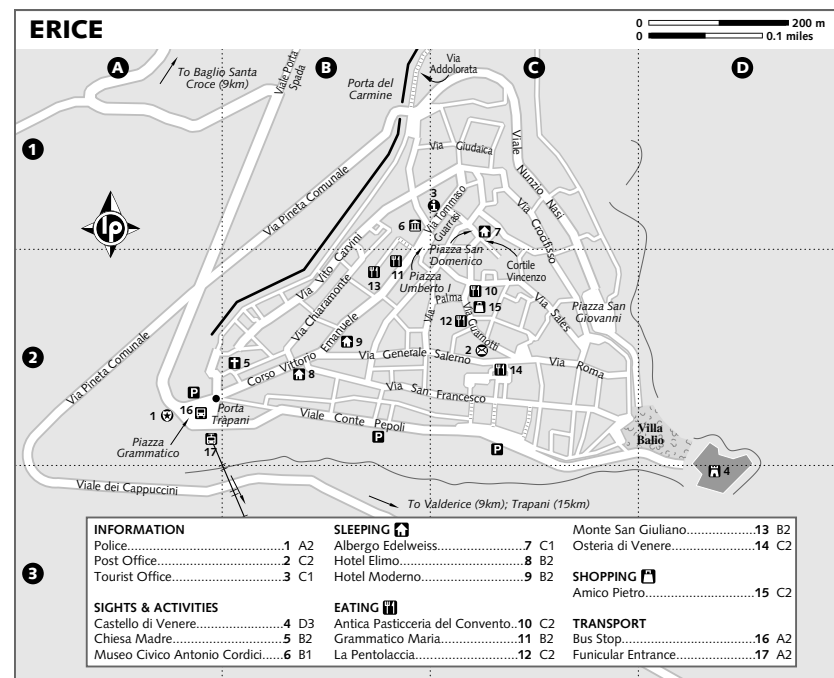
Mavi Rent (☎ 0923 2 86 55; www.mavirent.com in Italian; Via Marino Torre 21/23; per day 50cc scooter/500cc motorcycle €25/40, per week Fiat Punto car €330) has a wide range of scooters and a car-rental service with competitive rates. It also has an office at Vincenzo Florio airport.

There are taxi ranks on Piazza Umberto and at the ferry terminal.

ERICE

pop 28,900 / elev 751m

Erice watches over the port of Trapani from the legendary mountain of Eryx, situated



a giddy 750m above sea level. It's a mesmerising medieval town with stern-looking forts and churches, and its mountain charm is enhanced by the unpredictable weather that can take you from a sunny afternoon to a foggy evening. The town has sweeping views of the valley beneath it and the sea, and offers some pretty good restaurants and cake shops. Add to that the wonderful journey up on the funicular from Trapani, and a visit to Erice becomes a real mini-adventure. Shame about the enormous communication towers spoiling the surroundings, though.

The town has a notorious history as a centre for the cult of Venus (Astarte to the Phoenicians and Aphrodite to the Greeks). The mysterious Elymians claimed descent from Venus' famous Trojan son, Aeneas, who mentions the sanctuary as a holy landmark in the *Aeneid*. Inside the holy temple acolytes practised the peculiar ritual of sacred prostitution, with the prostitutes accommodated in the temple itself. Despite countless invasions the sacred site long remained inviolate – no guesses why!

Orientation

The town is shaped like a triangle and all vehicles arrive in Piazza Grammatico, from where you enter the town through the Porta Trapani. This puts you on Corso Vittorio Emanuele, the town's main road, which heads up to Piazza Umberto I, the central piazza. The other main road, which branches off Vittorio Emanuele, is Via Generale Salerno. This eventually brings you out at the castle.

Information

The friendly **tourist office** (☎ 0923 86 93 88; Via Tommaso Guarrasi 1; ☎ 8am-2pm Mon-Sat) is in the centre of town, as is the **post office** (Via Guarnotti; ☎ 8.15am-1.30pm Mon-Fri). The **police** (questura; Piazza Grammatico; ☎ 24hr) are at the main entrance to the old town.

Sights

Virgil once compared Eryx to Mt Athos for its altitude and spiritual pre-eminence. Not that Erice remains a sanctuary today – temples and convents have given way to carpet shops and souvenir stalls. Still, Erice is all about wall-hugging alleys, votive niches and secret

courtyards, which are best appreciated in the evenings and early mornings, when the day-trippers are not around.

At the top of the hill stands the Norman **Castello di Venere** (Castle of Venus; donations expected; ☎ 8am-7pm), built in the 12th and 13th centuries over an ancient temple of Venus, which was destroyed by Roger I when he captured the town. Not much more than a ruin today, the castle is upstaged by the panoramic vistas northeast to San Vito lo Capo and Monte Cofano (659m), and southwest to Trapani.

Of the several churches and other monuments in this small, quiet town, the **Chiesa Madre** (Via Vito Carvini; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-1pm & 3-5.15pm), just inside Porta Trapani, is probably the most interesting by virtue of its **campanile** (bell tower; admission €1) with mullioned windows. Built in 1314, the church had its interior, which has a lovely vaulted ceiling, remodelled in the neo-Gothic style in 1865, but the 15th-century side chapels were conserved.

At the top of Corso Vittorio Emanuele is the heart of the city, and the place where you'll find the **Museo Civico Antonio Cordici** (☎ 0923 86 91 72; Piazza Umberto I; admission free; ☎ 8.30am-1.30pm Tue, Wed & Fri, 8.30am-1.30pm & 2.30-5pm Mon & Thu). The museum houses finds from the town's necropolis, including a 4th-century head of Venus. The other piece worth seeing is an elegant *Annunciation* by Antonello Gagini.

Sleeping

Erice has some excellent hotels, and a quiet night in this medieval stronghold is an attraction in itself.

Albergo Edelweiss (☎ 0923 86 94 20; a.edelweiss@libero.it; Cortile Vincenzo 5; s/d €61/82) A good budget option with large rooms, spacious beds and small windows that look onto the plain below.

Baglio Santa Croce (☎ 0923 89 11 11; www.bagliosanta croce.it; Contrada Ragosia da Santa Croce, Valderice; s €54-65, d €108-130; ☎) This converted 17th-century *baglio* is located 9km east of Erice in Valderice. Set amid citrus groves and lush gardens, the hotel is full of authentic details, with exposed stone walls, original terracotta-tiled floors and olive-wood antiques. The swimming pool is a great addition in summer.

Hotel Moderno (☎ 0923 86 93 00; www.pippocatalano.it; Corso Vittorio Emanuele 63; s €75-95, d €100-130; ☎) This is a cosy small hotel with a friendly owner who speaks impeccable English and rooms that feature bright rugs and mismatched

pieces that somehow work together. The hotel has a good *enoteca*, and the restaurant prepares some of the best food in town.

Hotel Elimo (☎ 0923 86 93 77; www.charmerelax.com; Corso Vittorio Emanuele 75; s €80-110, d €130-150; ☎) A stylishly cluttered reception gives way to Erice's best-positioned hotel – all of the rooms enjoy enchanting views of the windswept coastal plain and shimmering sea below. The communal rooms are intimate and full of shady alcoves, beamed ceilings and marble fireplaces, while the plant-filled and terracotta-tiled terrace is sunny and looks onto the sea. The rooms are neat and light, with smooth, cream-coloured walls and expansive, comfortable beds.

Eating

RESTAURANTS

Monte San Giuliano (☎ 0923 86 95 95; Viccolo San Rocco 7; meals €25-35; ☎ closed Mon) Tucked behind Corso Vittorio Emanuele, this eatery is entered through a crumbling arch that leads onto a cool patio graced with drooping hydrangeas. The terrace has a canopy of green vines, and the pasta, fish and seafood are as delicious as the surroundings.

La Pentolaccia (☎ 0923 86 90 99; www.ristorante lapentolaccia.it; Via Guarnotti 17; meals €30-35; ☎ closed Tue) This is a smart, atmospheric restaurant inside a former 16th-century monastery. It can get swamped by tour groups but the food is good, with *pasta con le sarde* (pasta with sardines) and other favourites featuring on the menu.

Also recommended, away from the busy main street, is **Osteria di Venere** (☎ 0923 86 93 62; Via Roma 6; meals €20-25), a traditional tavern of the checked-tablecloth variety.

CAFÉS

Antica Pasticceria del Convento (☎ 0923 86 90 05; Via Guarnotti 1; sweets €1.50-3) Heavenly pastries and sweets mean it's hard to go past this little *pasticceria*. And since it's in an old convent, this is one time when gluttony doesn't really count as a sin.

our pick Grammatico Maria (☎ 0923 86 93 90; Via Vittorio Emanuele 14; cannoli €2.50) This café is run by Maria Grammatico, Sicily's most famous pastry chef. She was even the subject of Mary Taylor Simeti's book *Bitter Almonds*, a series of recipes and recollections from her childhood, which was when she learnt her considerable skills from the nuns of Erice. Try

the exquisite *cannoli* in the leafy back garden – they are some of the best you'll taste.

Shopping

Erice is justifiably famous for its *frazzate* (bright rugs made from colourful cotton rags), which are sold all along the main street. Erice also has a number of fairly good antique shops, one of the best being **Amico Pietro** (☎ 0923 86 92 44; Via Guarnotti 54/58), which sells quality ceramics, some lovely lacework and *presepi* (Nativity figurines).

Getting There & Away

The best way to get to Erice is on the **funicular** (☎ 0923 56 93 06, 0923 86 97 20; www.funiviaerice.it; Piazza Umberto I; one way/return €2/3.75; ☎ 8am-1am 2nd half Jul & Aug, 7.30am-8.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.45am-midnight Sat & Sun Sep-1st half Jul). To get to the funicular from Trapani, catch bus 23 from Via GB Fardella down to the end of Via Alessandro Manzoni, which is the point where Trapani ends and Erice begins. You can walk to the funicular station, but it takes around 30 minutes from/to the centre of Trapani.

There is a regular AST bus service to/from Trapani (€1.80, 45 minutes, 10 daily Monday to Saturday, four Sunday). All buses arrive and depart from Porta Trapani.

Metered parking is available along Viale Conte Pepoli (€1 per hour).

SEGESTA

elev 304m

The ancient Elymians must have been great aesthetes if their choice of sites is any indication. Set on the edge of a deep canyon in the midst of wild, desolate mountains, this huge 5th-century-BC temple is one of the world's most magical ancient sites. On windy days its 36 giant columns are said to act like an organ, producing mysterious notes.

The city was in constant conflict with Greek Selinunte, whose destruction (in 409 BC) the Elymians pursued with bloodthirsty determination – perhaps understandably, if the Elymians were indeed descended from the Trojans. Such mutual antipathy was to have fatal consequences, and more than 100 years later the Greek tyrant Agathocles slaughtered over 10,000 Elymians and repopulated the city with Greeks.

There are two outstanding surviving sites: the theatre high up on the mountain, with commanding views out to Castellammare

del Golfo, and the never-completed **Doric temple** (☎ 0924 95 23 56; adult/concession €6/3; ☎ 9am-4pm Nov-Mar, 9am-7pm Apr-Aug). The latter dates from around 430 BC and is remarkably well preserved.

From mid-June to mid-September, performances of Greek plays are staged in the theatre. For information, contact the **tourist office** (☎ 0923 2 90 00; www.aptrapani.it in Italian; Piazza Saturno; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun) in Trapani.

Segesta is accessible by **AST** (☎ 0924 3 10 20) bus from the main bus station in Trapani (€3, 25 minutes, five daily in summer, reduced service October to May). Otherwise, you can catch an infrequent train from Trapani (€3, 25 minutes, 10 daily) or Palermo (€5.50, one hour 40 minutes, three daily) to Segesta Tempio; the site is a 20-minute walk away. There are signs to direct you.

A shuttle bus runs every 30 minutes from the entrance 1.5km uphill to the theatre and costs an additional €1.20. If you've got the energy, walk up instead – the views are spectacular.

OFFSHORE ISLANDS

THE EGADI ISLANDS

pop 4280

For centuries the Egadi Islanders have lived from the sea, as the prehistoric cave paintings on Levanzo illustrate. Later, when the islands were a key Carthaginian stronghold, one of the most critical battles of the Punic Wars was fought in 241 BC at Cala Rossa (Red Cove), which earned its name from the amount of Carthaginian blood spilt.

The Arabs used the Egadi Islands (Isole Egadi) as a stepping stone en route to their invasions, and the lucrative tuna industry caused subsequent conquerors to fortify the islands heavily. In the 17th century the islands were sold to Genovese bankers, who then in turn sold them to the business tycoon Ignazio Florio in 1874. The Egadi Islands only became part of the Italian state in 1937.

Nowadays, the Egadi Islands are magnificent for swimming, diving, eating and general relaxing. Unfortunately, the waters around the islands have been terribly overfished, and the tuna fishery (once the only

LA MATTANZA

An ancient tradition, the Egadi Islands' *mattanza* (ritual tuna slaughter) survives despite the ever-decreasing number of tuna swimming into the local waters each year.

For centuries schools of tuna have used the waters around western Sicily as a mating ground. Locals can recall the golden days of the island's fishing industry, when it was not uncommon to catch giant breeding tuna of between 200kg and 300kg. Fish that size are rare these days and the annual catch is increasingly smaller due to the worldwide commercial overfishing of tuna.

Traditionally, tuna traps were set around the coast of Sicily once a year. The number of tuna caught by this method was relatively small and sustainable – the fact that the *mattanza* took place for around 900 years without overfishing is testament to this. Problems arose with the increase in commercial fishing in the 1960s: tuna was caught year-round, and deep waters were exploited using long-line fishing and indiscriminate means such as drift and gill nets. Anything that passed by was caught, and thus the oceans' fish resources were depleted.

According to some scientists, additional problems such as high legal fishing quotas and illegal fishing are causing 'irreversible' damage to bluefin tuna stock. Fishermen have largely lost their livelihoods, so some have reinvented La Mattanza as a tourist attraction.

From around 20 May to 10 June, tourists flock to the Egadi Islands to witness the event. For a fee you can join the fishermen in their boats and watch them catching the tuna at close hand, but keep in mind that nets have been known to come up empty in the last few years.

If you do decide to go, remember that this is no ordinary fishing expedition. The fishermen organise their boats and nets in a complex formation designed to channel the tuna into a series of enclosures, which culminate in the *camera della morte* (chamber of death). Once enough tuna are imprisoned, the fishermen close in and the *mattanza* begins. It is a bloody affair – up to eight or more fishermen at a time will sink huge hooks into a tuna and drag it aboard. Anyone who has seen Rossellini's classic film *Stromboli* will no doubt recall the *mattanza* scene, one of the most famous accounts of this ancient tradition.

cannery in Europe) is now a distant memory, causing a dent in the local economy.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Siremar and Ustica Lines run hydrofoils to the islands from Trapani; see p110. In summer, there is also a daily service to Favignana and Levanzo from Marsala; see p124 for details.

Services between the islands are cheap and quick. From Favignana you can connect easily to Levanzo (€2.50, 10 minutes) and Marettimo (€6.90, 30 minutes).

Favignana

The largest of the islands is the butterfly-shaped Favignana, which is dominated by Monte Santa Caterina (287m) to the west. You can easily explore it on a bicycle, as the eastern half of the island is almost completely flat. Around the coast tufa quarries are carved out of the crystal-clear waters, most notably around **Cala Rossa** and **Cavallo**.

INFORMATION

Banco del Popolo (Piazza Europa) Has an ATM.

Internet Elyos (☎ 0923 92 25 87; Piazza Madrice 37; per hr €6) A good place with an ADSL connection and several computers.

Police (questura; Palazzo Florio) In the old home of the Florios, just up from the dock.

Post office (Via Marconi; ☎ 8am-1.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat)

Tourist office (☎ 0923 92 16 47; www.egadiweb.it/proloco in Italian; Piazza Madrice 8; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 4.30-7pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-12.30pm Sun Jun-Sep) Helpful office in Favignana town.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

The first thing you'll see as you step off the boat is the abandoned **Stabilimento Florio tonnara**. It was shut down in 1977 due to the general crisis in the local tuna-fishing industry and, although there are plans to restore it as a cultural centre, the plans seem to be permanently stalled for lack of funding.

Around the harbour you can sign up for some diving and boating. Unsurprisingly, the crystal-clear waters are a favourite with divers, and **Atlantide** (☎ 0923 92 21 81, 347 050 44 92; www.progettoatlantide.com; Piazza Marina) runs international diving courses, as well as archaeological and night-time dives. For boats try next door at **Catalano** (☎ 339 691 66 18; Piazza Marina), where a dinghy/boat costs €80/110 per day.

If fishing is your thing, ask at the tourist office about **pescaTurismo** (per person per day around €30), where local fishermen can take a group for a three-day jolly around the islands.

The best beaches are on the southern side of the island at **Miramare** and **Lido Burrone**.

SLEEPING

There are plenty of accommodation options on Favignana, but during La Mattanza and in August you'll have trouble finding a bed if you don't book in advance. Many locals rent out rooms.

Camping Egad (☎ 0923 92 15 55; www.egadi.com/egad in Italian; Località Arena; camp site per person €5-7, 2-bed bungalow €34-80, 4-bed bungalow €64-130) This well-equipped camping ground is situated in the centre of the island. The two-bed bungalow is not available in August.

Miramare (☎ 0923 92 13 10; www.villaggiomiramare.it; Località Costicella; per person camp site €9-16.50, bungalow €37-62) This four-star camping ground has well-equipped bungalows and tent area. Its large playground and proximity to the beach makes it excellent for families.

Albergo Aegusa (☎ 0923 92 24 30; www.aegusahotel.it; Via Garibaldi 11, Favignana town; s €45-90, d €70-150; ♿) An attractive converted palazzo with comfortable, well-furnished rooms right in the centre of Favignana. There is also a good restaurant in an outdoor courtyard.

Pickup Albergo Egadi (☎/fax 0923 92 12 32; www.albergoegadi.it in Italian; Via Colombo 17, Favignana town; s €50-100, d €100-200) It's a real treat staying at Albergo Egadi, with its lush beds, antique furniture and gushing showers. Decorated in French countryside style, the upstairs rooms have massive terraces and are painted in electric blues and salmon pinks. In addition, the sisters who run this small hotel are friendly and welcoming. The hotel also has the island's best restaurant (closed Wednesday and February), which specialises in a five-course tasting menu (€50 per head) that serves a different speciality each night. Advance bookings for the restaurant are essential in summer.

L'Approdo di Ulisse Club (☎ 0923 92 50 00; www.aurumhotels.it; Cala Grande; s €85-210, d €170-348, all incl full board; ♿) On the western side of the island, this place offers a series of white-washed bungalows set around the hotel's own private beach. The facilities here are excellent, and include a huge pool, tennis courts and professional diving courses. The

price includes room, meals, drinks and sporting activities.

EATING & DRINKING

Not surprisingly, tuna is the thing to eat on the islands, served in a multitude of ways. The best restaurant is at Albergo Egadi (left), but the following places are also good.

La Tavernetta (☎ 0923 92 16 39; Piazza Madrice 54; meals €20-25) A popular restaurant with a terrace on the buzzing main square. Fish and seafood are the specialities here, as well as fresh pasta.

El Pescador (☎ 0923 92 10 35; Piazza Europa 38; meals €25-30; ☎ closed Wed & Feb) A local favourite that rustles up great pasta dishes, nearly all with a fish theme. Try the *spaghetti con ricci*.

Zazzamita (Zona Cavallo; ☎ 7pm-late) For a laid-back evening, grab a chair in the candlelit garden and enjoy the live music.

SHOPPING

There are plenty of shops that specialise in tuna-related products if you want to stock up on your way home from Favignana. One great little deli you should make a stop at is **Casa del Tonno** (☎ 0923 92 22 27; 12 Via Roma); it's not only filled to the rafters with smoked and canned bluefin tuna, it also sells a host of other fishy delicacies such as *bottarga* (roe) and sardines.

GETTING AROUND

A bicycle or a scooter is a very good way to get around Favignana, giving you access to all the little coves and beaches dotting the island. There are plenty of places offering bikes for hire, including **Il Noleggio** (☎ 0923 92 54 09; Piazza Matrice 29) and **Da Rita** (11 Piazza Europa). The standard hire charge for bicycles/scooters is €5/25 per day.

Tarantola run buses around the island (€1, eight daily) from Piazza Marina in Favignana town. There is a coastal route and an inland route, both of which leave from near the main port.

Levanzo

There are two main reasons to visit Levanzo: to examine the prehistoric cave paintings at the Grotta del Genovese, and to spend some time swimming off its pebbly beaches in the crystal-clear waters.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

The Upper Palaeolithic wall paintings and Neolithic incised drawings at the **Grotta del Genovese** (Genovese Cave) were discovered by accident in 1949. Between 6000 and 10,000 years old, the images mostly feature animals; the later ones also include men and tuna. To get there, you can try to follow the path across the island, but be warned that it is rough going on your own. You can check with the custodian, **Signor Natale Castiglione** (☎ 0923 92 40 32, 0339 741 88 00; ncasti@tin.it; tour €6-15; 🕒 10am-1pm & 3-6pm), who is available for guided tours. You will find him in his souvenir shop on the elevated street directly behind the port. Alternatively, you can take the sea route by hiring one of the several sea taxis that advertise in the town's two bars: it should cost you €15 per person at most. The sea taxis can also be hired for trips around the island.

There are three great spots to go swimming, all a healthy walk from the town. To get to **Faraglione**, take a left through the town and walk about 1km west along the road until you see a couple of rocks sticking out of the water a few metres offshore. If you fancy something a little quieter, keep going until you get to **Capo Grosso**, on the northern side of the island, where there is also a lighthouse. Alternatively, take a right out of town and walk along the dirt road. The road forks 300m past the first bend; take the rocky path down towards the sea and keep going until you get to **Cala Minnola**, a small landing bay with crystal-clear water where, outside the month of August, you can swim in peace and tranquillity.

SLEEPING & EATING

There are two hotels in Levanzo.

Albergo Paradiso (☎ 0923 92 40 80; 📍 Via Lungomare; s €35-50, d €70-90; 🍴) The most attractive place to stay, with a pretty geranium-clad terrace where you can eat well (meals €30 to €35). Rooms are simply furnished.

Pensione dei Fenici (☎ /fax 0923 92 40 83; 📍 Via Calvario 11; s €60-70, d €120-140, all incl half board; 🍴) Right behind the Paradiso is the Fenici, a massive concrete block of a hotel with a cavernous dining hall. Rooms have a Spartan feel, but there are great views from the terrace.

There are a couple of small cafés where you can get coffee, snacks and gelato. There's also a small *alimentari* (grocery store) on Via Lungomare.

Marettimo

The most westward of the Egadi Islands, Marettimo is a collection of green mountain peaks and white-washed houses dipping into a little harbour packed with bobbing fishermen's boats. Marettimo is also the wildest and least developed of the islands. However, with the overfishing of tuna affecting fishermen's incomes, the villagers are starting to see the economic potential in tourism. This doesn't mean that you'll find it packed at any time of the year – on the contrary, this tiny island is pretty much wilderness personified – but more accommodation options have cropped up in the last few years.

Do note that the island virtually shuts down in the winter months.

ACTIVITIES

Marettimo is a perfect place for relaxation and swimming – there are good beaches at **Cala Sarda**, **Cala Nera** and stunning **Cala Bianco**. For fishing trips, contact the local fishermen's association, **San Giuseppe Association** (☎ 0923 92 32 90; www.isoleegadi.it/S.Giuseppe). You can also go walking in unspoilt nature; there's only one road on the island and not that many cars – the main mode of transport is electric carts.

SLEEPING

Marettimo's accommodation is mainly composed of apartments, though private rooms are an option. All the options listed following are in Marettimo town. Book in advance in the summer months, especially August.

Marettimo Residence (☎ 0923 92 32 02; www.marettimoresidence.it; Via Telegrafo 3; s €52-124, d €64-150; 🍴) This small apartment complex shaded by bougainvillea and palm trees caters mostly to families. Each apartment comes with a full kitchen and a small porch, and there's a breakfast bar (€6 per person) that also serves coffee, water and juice all day. There's a small swimming pool and a barbecue area, and, if you're staying for longer than a week, the staff will do your laundry too. It's open year-round.

Le Conchiglie (☎ 333 32 13 66 3; www.leconchiglie.org in Italian; 2-person apt €80-100, 4-person apt €100-120; 🕒 closed Nov-Apr; 🍴) This newly built small block overlooking the port has apartments with well-equipped kitchens; some have small terraces. Options range from small studios to family apartments that sleep between four and six people.

You can contact **Rosa dei Venti** (☎ 0923 92 32 49; www.isoladimarettimo.it in Italian) if you wish to arrange private rooms or tours of the island. Expect to pay between €55 and €65 for a double in private accommodation, depending on the season.

EATING

Marettimo's restaurants are few but of a high quality.

our pick **Il Veliero** (☎ 0923 92 32 74; Via Umberto 22; meals €30-35) A cosy, intimate restaurant that makes food like (you wish) your mother made it, only better, because the chef goes to the market daily, picking out the freshest catches. Thanks to his labours, you get to start with an octopus salad or marinated sardines, move onto fish couscous or a nice plate of spaghetti with *frutti di mare* (seafood), tuck into some grilled squid for a main, and have fruit or ice cream as your finale. Il Veliero sports its Slow Food Movement badge with pride and deserves every bit of it.

our pick **Il Timone** (☎ 0923 92 31 42; Via Garibaldi 18; meals €35-40; 🕒 closed Nov-Apr) Another Slow Food Movement champion, this family-run trattoria has the parents, son and daughter all working hard to prepare fabulously tasty food. The antipasti are delicious, mostly focusing on seafood – try the clam-and-mussel soup – and the fresh pasta is Il Timone's pride and joy. Try it in *bustiate con i ricci* (short pasta with sea urchin meat), or with a sauce of swordfish and almonds. The mains are all about fresh fish and seafood.

Another recommended restaurant is **Il Pirata** (☎ 0923 92 30 27; Via Scalo Vecchio; meals €25-30), which also focuses on fresh fish and seafood dishes.

PANTELLERIA**pop 7300**

Called Bint el-Rhir (Daughter of the Winds) by the Arabs, Pantelleria is characterised by jagged lava stone, low-slung caper bushes, dwarf vines and steaming fumaroles – as well as A-list celebrities and Italian fashionistas. What, you may wonder, is the attraction? Is it the remote location? The exoticism of an island known as the 'Black Pearl of the Mediterranean'? Or the simple fact that the island is breathtakingly beautiful? Drive around on a sunny day and the stunning visual juxtaposition of black lava stone against velvet green vineyards and psychedelic splashes of bougainvillea, all framed by the deepest blue

sea, will probably explain it – you won't want to leave, either.

The Arabs settled here in the 8th century, leaving an indelible mark on the island with their odd, domed *dammusi* (low-level dwellings made of thick volcanic rock) to the rather un-Islamic cultivation of the zibibbo grape, used in the production of the local wine *moscato di passito di Pantelleria*. Many of their habits remain, with the result that Pantelleria is the only truly agricultural community remaining in the Med.

Orientation

Apart from Malta, this is the largest of the islands surrounding Sicily, so you'll need to use some kind of motorised transport to get around. The town of Pantelleria occupies the northwestern tip; the airport is 6km southeast of town. Most of the island's places of interest are along the southwestern and northeastern coasts.

Information

Banks can be found along Via Borgo Italia in Pantelleria town.

Agenzia Rizzo (☎ 0923 91 11 04; www.agenziarizzo.com; Via Borgo Italia 12) Come here for Siremar and Tirrenia tickets, or for accommodation in *dammusi*.

Ambulance (☎ 0923 91 11 10)

First Aid (☎ 0923 69 92 84; 🕒 flight times) At the airport.

Internet Point (Via Dante 7; per 30min €6; 🕒 9.30am-1.30pm & 5-8.45pm) Youth centre with gaming machines and internet access.

La Cossira (☎ 0923 91 10 78; www.lacossira.it in Italian; Via Borgo Italia 19) Travel agency dealing with all flights off the island and *dammuso* lettings.

Police (questura; ☎ 0923 91 11 09)

Tourist office (☎ 0923 91 18 38; www.pantelleria.it in Italian; Piazza Cavour; 🕒 9.30am-12.30pm & 5.30-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 9-11am Sun) In a corner of the municipal hall. Good information on the island, and the website has a good range of *dammusi* to rent.

Valenza Libreria (Via Borgo Italia 69) Sells the book *L'ABC* (€7.80), which outlines walking itineraries and has a town plan tucked in the back. Also sells the most comprehensive map of the island (€7).

WWII and rebuilt with modern, cube-shaped houses. The other main towns are Gadir (the prettiest of the towns), Rekalè (in the remote south of the island) and Scauri (the island's second port). You can take in all the villages during a day's drive.

More curious are the island's natural phenomena, including the 24 **cuddie** (ancient craters of red volcanic rock) surrounding the main volcano, Monte Grande (836m), which dominates the centre of the island. At the summit is the **Stufa del Bagno di Arturo**, a steaming natural sauna, and the milky white **Specchio di Venere** (Mirror of Venus), where the bodies beautiful (most famously a pregnant Madonna) come to wallow in the volcanic mud; the Stufa del Bagno di Arturo can get extremely hot, so beware. Another of these milky turquoise lakes, much bigger in size and more accessible, is the **Bagno dell'Acqua** (Lago di Venere), which can be viewed from the ancient village of Bugeber. In August horse races are held around the lake.

If you can't face steaming caves, boiling mud baths and baking volcanic mountains, plunge into the cool green of the **Valle di Monastero**, south of Monte Grande, or the **Valle di Ghirlanda**, southeast of Monte Gibele. Both are carpeted by vines that are harvested in September. This is the perfect place for hiking or riding.

Also worth checking out are the *sesi*, massive Neolithic funeral cairns with low passages leading to the centre. The most impressive of them is the **Sese del Re**, about 15 minutes' walk south of the Cuddie Rosse on the northwestern coast. The island was once dotted with these mounds but over the years most were dismantled and the stones used in the construction of modern *dammusi*. These dwellings have been modelled on the *sesi*, with thick, whitewashed volcanic-rock walls and shallow cupolas keeping the inside nice and cool.

The island is equally famous for its secluded coves and sea grottoes, which are perfect for snorkelling and diving. The northeastern end of the island provides the best spots, with a popular **acquacalda** (hot spring) at Gadir. Boat excursions, such as those offered by **Minardi Adriano** (☎ 0923 91 15 02; Via Borgo Italia 5; day trips per person €20), are available at the dock and are the perfect way to visit some of the more inaccessible grottoes around the island. Divers should get in touch with **Green Divers** (☎ 0923 91 82 09; www.greendivers.it in Italian; Mursia), which

can arrange exciting archaeological dives and night-time dips.

Sleeping

HOTELS
Summer bookings should be made at least a month in advance.

Bue Marino (☎ 0923 91 10 54; Contrada Bue Marino; s €36-50, d €72-100) Roughly a 1km walk out of town, this small, intimate hotel has an impressive cliff-top location. The restaurant is also good, and it sells a lot of the island's produce, including capers, oil and wine.

Albergo Papuscia (☎ 0923 91 54 63; www.papuscia.it in Italian; Corso da Sopra Portella 48, Località Tracino; s €42-70, d €84/140; 🍷) Situated on the eastern side of the island, this lovely little *albergo* (hotel) in a typical *dammuso* is surrounded by a flower-filled garden. It's run by a mother and daughter, and the hotel's restaurant (meals €25 to €30) serves up Mamma's own cooking.

Hotel Mursia (☎ 0923 91 12 17; www.mursiahotel.it; Località Mursia; s €50-105, d €100-210; 🍷 🍷 🍷) Pantelleria's only large modern hotel has a waterfront location and all the expected facilities including two massive pools, tennis court, a diving centre and its own private beach. It also runs the Hotel Cossyra (singles €35 to €80, doubles €70 to €160), which is set back from the seafront and offers cheaper rooms; it also has a pool, parking and air-con.

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

If you're in a group you should consider renting a *dammuso*.

ourpick Zubeb Resort (☎ 0923 91 36 53; www.zubebi.it; Contrada Zubebi; 2-4-person apt €800-1600; 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷) This is a beautifully styled complex made up of traditional *dammusi* overlooking the harbour. Inside, the décor is austere minimalist, with smooth concrete walls and tactile Indian furnishings. There is also an uberstylish (though slightly impractical) crescent-shaped pool, a massage parlour inside an old Arab garden and on-site scooters. Each *dammuso* has its own cubbyhole kitchenette on its terrace.

Most bars and restaurants have notices advertising rentals. Expect to pay about €800 to €1500 per week for four people in August. **Agenzia Rizzo** (☎ 0923 91 11 04; www.agenziarizzo.com; Via Borgo Italia 12, Pantelleria town) organises renovated *dammusi* all over the island; a two-/four-bedroom apartment costs €800/1600.

Eating

Habibi Club (☎ 333 739 90 63; Località Mursia; couscous €14; 🍷) evening Jul & Aug) Bookings are essential at this converted *dammuso* next to the Mursia Hotel. It only serves the famed fish couscous and it's all freshly prepared for you.

Il Capperò (☎ 0923 91 26 01; Via Roma 31, Pantelleria town; meals €25-30; 🍷) closed Mon Oct-Apr) Wonderfully unpretentious, with excellent pasta and fish dishes. Try the local speciality, *ravioli con menta e ricotta* (ravioli with mint and ricotta cheese). Bookings recommended for Saturday.

Trattoria Favarotta (☎ 0923 91 43 47; Contrada Favarotta; meals €25-30; 🍷) closed Wed & winter) Trattoria Favarotta has an excellent reputation for tasty, local fare including *spaghetti con pesto pantsesco* (spaghetti with a tomato, garlic, pepper and basil sauce), and roast hare.

Mulini (☎ 0923 91 53 98; Contrada Tracino; meals €30-35; 🍷) closed Jan & Feb) Located in a converted mill, this is one of Pantelleria's best restaurants. The most famous dish on the menu is the *baci*, a dessert composed of crispy layers of pastry stuffed with ricotta.

Entertainment

Oxidiana (☎ 0923 91 23 19; Contrada Kuddie Rosse; 🍷) 4pm-4am Jun-Sep) Pantelleria's only disco is full to the gunwales in summer. The building is built from black lava, which gives it an eerie atmosphere at night. It also runs a popular pizzeria.

Shopping

Pantelleria has a healthy supply of slippers and sandals shops to cater for all those fashion victims. What you *should* stock up on is the island's own range of cosmetic products, Linea Cosmetica Lago di Venere, made from the mineral-rich mud of the Bagno dell'Aqua. They are available from **Il Mirto e la Rosa** (☎ 0923 91 19 21; Via Catania 3), just off Via Borgo Italia.

For all that sweet, sweet wine and jars full of pickles and preserves, excellent **La Nicchia** (☎ 0923 91 29 68; Via Messina 22) can cater to your every craving.

Getting There & Away

Pantelleria is 30 minutes by plane with Air Sicilia from Palermo (€28.50, one hour 20 minutes, one daily); **Air One** (☎ 848 84 88 80) and Alitalia fly from Rome (from €172). The local bus connects Pantelleria town with the **airport** (☎ 0923 84 12 22).

All boats arrive at the port in Pantelleria town. Ustica Lines has hydrofoils departing from Trapani (€34, 2½ hours, one daily) from June to September. Siremar also runs a ferry from Trapani (€30, five hours, one daily) and a fast boat from Mazara del Vallo (€34, 2½ hours, one daily) between June and September. There are reduced services from October to May, but they are dependent on the weather conditions.

For agents selling plane and ferry tickets, see p117.

Getting Around

Local buses (€0.85, Monday to Saturday) depart from Piazza Cavour in Pantelleria town at regular intervals and service all the towns on the island.

You can rent scooters and cars from **Autoneggio Policardo** (☎ 0923 91 28 44; Vicolo Messina 35; per day scooters €10-25, Fiat Panda cars €15-40), just down the alley to the left of the Port Hotel as you approach from the harbour.

SALINE DI TRAPANI

Driving along the SS115 coast road between Trapani and Marsala you will find yourself in a bleached landscape of *saline* (shallow pools) and softly shimmering heaps of salt. Flat and featureless, the only interruption on the coastal salt pans are small *mulini* (windmills), which were used to grind the salt. The salt from these marshes is considered the best in Italy and has been big business since the 12th century; now, however, salt production has fallen off massively and only a cottage industry remains, providing for Italy's more discerning dinner tables.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

The most attractive spot along the coast, where the salt pans glitter undisturbed by modern construction, is the **Riserva Naturale di Stagnone**, a noted wetlands area taking in the Stagnone Islands (Isole delle Stagnone) and the long arm of Isola Lunga, which protects the shallow waters of the lagoon.

In the foreground floats the site of ancient **Mozia** (also known as Motya or Mothia), on the tiny island of San Pantaleo. The island is connected to the mainland by a Phoenician road, which can be seen at a depth of 1m below the water. San Pantaleo was bought by

the amateur archaeologist Joseph Whitaker, who was intrigued by the unusual fragments of pottery that had been unearthed. He built a villa here, and spent decades excavating the island and assembling the unique collection of Phoenician artefacts that now appear in the museum. What his weekend archaeology revealed was one of the most important Phoenician settlements in the Mediterranean, coveted for its strategic position. It is also the best-preserved Phoenician site in the world as the Romans utterly destroyed Carthage, sowing the ground with salt so that no living thing should remain. You can take a pleasant stroll around the island, following the path to various excavations, including the ancient port and dry dock, where you can see the submerged road. Afterwards, visit the **Whitaker Museum** (☎ 0923 71 25 98; admission €6; ☞ 9am-1pm Oct-Feb, 9am-1pm & 3-6.30pm Mar-Sep). Its main treasure is *Il Giovannetto di Mozia*.

On the mainland near the pier is the small **Museo Saline Ettore e Inferza** (☎ 0923 96 69 36; admission €3; ☞ 9.30am-1.30pm & 3-7pm), a salt museum housed in an old windmill that shows a video of the whole salt-making process; it even runs its windmill from 4pm to 6pm Wednesday to Saturday. In summer, ask at the reception about renting canoes (€5 per hour) so that you can weave your way in and out of the salt pans.

SLEEPING & EATING

La Finestra sul Sale (☎ 0923 73 30 03; fax 0923 73 31 42; Contrada Ettore Inferza 55; s/d €100/130; ☞) Run by the Museo Saline Ettore e Inferza, this spot has three lovely rooms located above a café, overlooking the salt pans, their windmills and San Pantaleo. The rooms are nicely decked out with terracotta floors and neat blue-and-yellow furnishings.

There is also a busy café opposite the pier, with outdoor tables overlooking San Pantaleo and the lagoon. It is a lovely place for an evening drink as the sun turns the salt pans rosy pink.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

San Pantaleo is accessible by a private boat (€3 return), which operates 9am to around 6pm; in winter, it only operates in the morning. To get to the embarkation point from Marsala, take local bus 4 from Piazza del Popolo (€4.25, 25 minutes, one daily Monday to Saturday).

THE SOUTHWEST

MARSALA

pop 78,000

Many know about its sweet dessert wines, but few people realise what a charmer the town of Marsala is. Elegant and full of stately baroque buildings, with a busy main square guarded by an imposing cathedral, tranquil Marsala is all about the simple pleasures – food, wine and, judging by the crowds in the square, lots of family fun.

Marsala was founded by the Phoenicians who escaped from Mozia. They settled here on Capo Lilibeo, calling their city Lilybaeum and fortifying it with 7m-thick walls that ensured it was the last Punic settlement to fall to the Romans. In AD 830 it was conquered by the Arabs, who gave it its current name Marsa Allah (Port of God).

It was here in 1860 that Garibaldi landed in his rickety old boats with his famous 1000-strong army, a claim to fame that finds its way into every tourist brochure in the city.

Orientation

The city of Marsala hugs a small promontory looking out onto the vast Mediterranean Sea. The old city is clustered around the tip, separated from the sea by Via Lungomare Boeo. The main entrance to the old city is through the Porta Nuova (New Gate) at one end of Viale Vittorio Veneto, which runs southeast from Via Lungomare Boeo. Alternatively, from Piazza Piemonte e Lombardo walk north along Viale dei Mille and enter the old city through the older Porta Garibaldi. Piazza della Repubblica is halfway up Via Garibaldi. You'll find the train station situated southeast of the old city.

Information

You'll find banks with ATMs all over the town of Marsala.

Ambulance (☎ 0923 95 14 10)

Biblioteca Comunale (Town Library; 100 Via XI Maggio; per hr €6; ☞ 9am-1pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) Has internet access.

Information booth (Via Lungomare Boeo; ☞ 9am-2pm & 4-8pm Tue-Sun) Next to the Museo Archeologico Regionale Baglio Anselmi.

Ospedale San Baggio (☎ 0923 71 60 31; Piazza San Francesco; ☞ 24hr)

Police (questura; ☎ 0923 92 43 71; Corso Antonio Gramsci; ☞ 24hr)

MARSALA

0 300 m
0 0.2 miles

INFORMATION

Biblioteca Comunale.....	1	C2
Information Booth.....	2	A1
Ospedale San Baggio.....	3	C1
Police.....	4	D1
Post Office.....	5	C2
Tourist Office.....	6	C2

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Cathedral.....	7	B2
Cine Impero.....	8	B1
Complesso Monumentale San Pietro.....	9	C1
Convento del Carmine.....	10	B2
Insula Romana.....	11	B1
Museo Archeologico Regionale Baglio Anselmi.....	12	A1
Museo degli Arazzi Fiammingi.....	13	B2
Palazzo Comunale.....	14	C2
Porta Nuova.....	15	B1
Villa Cavallotti.....	16	B1

EATING

Caffetteria Grand Italia.....	19	C2
Divino...Rosso.....	20	B1
Garibaldi.....	21	B2
Il Gallo e L'Innamorata.....	22	C2
La Sirena Ubriaca.....	23	B2
Market.....	24	B2
Pasticceria di Gianfranco Vivonna.....	25	C2

SHOPPING

Enoteca Miriade di Sapori.....	26	C2
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TRANSPORT

Bus Station.....	27	D3
Buses to Palermo.....	28	C2
Local Buses.....	(see 28)	

SLEEPING

Hotel Centrale.....	17	B1
Hotel Garden.....	18	D2

Post office (Via Garibaldi; ☞ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Sat) Just southeast of Piazza della Repubblica.

Tourist office (☎ 0923 71 40 97; Via XI Maggio 100; ☞ 8am-2pm & 3-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun) A friendly tourist office with a good map and brochures.

Sights

MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO REGIONALE BAGLIO ANSELMI

Marsala's finest treasure, and definitely worth the trip alone, is the partially reconstructed Carthaginian warship in its **Museo Archeologico Regionale Baglio Anselmi** (☎ 0923 95 25 35; Via Lungomare Boeo; admission €3; ☞ 9am-1.30pm Mon, Tue & Thu, 9am-1.30pm & 4-6.30pm Wed & Fri-Sun). The warship was sunk off the Egadi Islands during the First Punic War nearly 3000 years ago, and these delicate remnants are the only remaining physical evidence of Phoenician seafaring genius. The wreck was discovered in 1971 in the Stagnone lagoon; it's actually only a small part of the original ship, carefully reconstructed to give an impression of what it would have looked like. Manned by 68 oarsmen, the 35m-long warship is thought to have been part of the Carthaginian fleet attacked by

the Romans in 241 BC at the Battle of Egadi. If you visit here after viewing the excavations on Mozia the ship resonates with history, providing a glimpse into a civilisation that was extinguished by the Romans.

The exhibition also includes objects found on board: ropes, ceramic fragments, corks from amphorae, a brush and a sailor's wooden button. In an adjacent room are two beautiful mosaics from the 3rd and 5th centuries AD, as well as other bits and bobs recovered from the nearby dig of the **Insula Romana** (☞ closed indefinitely), a 3rd-century Roman villa.

PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA

Walking or driving from Capo Lilibeo, you will enter the historic centre through **Porta Nuova**, a grand Renaissance arch that sets the tone of the town. At the town's heart is the elegant Piazza della Repubblica, dominated by the imposing **cathedral**. Although started in 1628, the church's façade wasn't completed until 1956 (courtesy of a cash donation by a returning emigrant). The cavernous interior, divided into three aisles highlighted

by tall columns, contains a number of sculptures by the Gagini brothers but little else.

On the eastern side of the square is the arcaded **Palazzo Comunale** (Town Hall), formerly known as the Palazzo Senatorio (Senatorial Palace).

MUSEO DEGLI ARAZZI FIAMMINGI

Just behind the cathedral is the **Museo degli Arazzi Fiammingi** (☎ 0923 71 29 03; Via Guiseppe Garraffa 57; admission €2.50; ☹ 9am-1pm & 4-6pm Tue-Sun), with its eight magnificent Flemish tapestries. They were made in Brussels between 1530 and 1550, and were gifted to the Marsala-born archbishop of Messina, Antonio Lombardo (1523-95), by Felipe II. Lombardo in turn presented them to the cathedral in 1589. Representing the Roman capture of Jerusalem from the Saracens, the tapestries have been carefully restored and are now on display across three dimly lit floors.

COMPLESSO MONUMENTALE SAN PIETRO & CONVENTO DEL CARMINE

Housed in a beautiful restored building, the **Complesso Monumentale San Pietro** (☎ 0923 71 87 41; Via Ludovico Anselmi Correale; admission free; ☹ 9am-1pm & 4-8pm) attracts locals and visitors alike. A former Benedictine monastery (dating from the 16th century), it has permanent exhibitions from Garibaldi, an archaeological section with an interesting fragment of a sculpture of Eros catching a ride on the back of a duck, and items from Lilibaeo's necropolis. Another area is dedicated to folk traditions.

Another attractive gallery is the restored **Convento del Carmine** (☎ 0923 71 16 31; Piazza Carmine; admission free; ☹ 10am-1pm & 5-7pm). Parts of the building date from 1155, when the Carmelites first came to Marsala with Roger I's widow Adelaide. After years of neglect and a spell as a police barracks, the convent has been returned to its former glory, and is now an art gallery and a centre for civil weddings.

OTHER SIGHTS

On the western edge of Piazza della Vittoria is the **Cine Impero** (Empire Cinema), a marvelous example of Italian futurist architecture popular during the Fascist era.

If you're travelling with small children, they might enjoy the **Villa Cavallotti**, a large park just outside Porta Nuova that has a playground and acres of space for a relaxing walk.

Festivals & Events

Processione del Giovedì Santo (Holy Thursday Procession) Held on the Thursday before Easter, this is Marsala's most important annual event and a centuries-old tradition. Actors depict the events leading up to Christ's crucifixion, and many children dress in colourful costumes as saints.

Marsala Jazz Festival Held in the historic centre in July, this festival is sponsored by Marsala wine companies and increasingly attracts major artists.

Sleeping

Marsala has few hotels situated within the city centre; most tend to be on the roads exiting the city.

Hotel Garden (☎/fax 0923 98 23 20; Via Gambini 36; s/d with shared bathroom €35/45, d with private bathroom & air-con €55; Ⓟ) A grey block of flats disguises this good old-fashioned *pensione*, run by a sweet old couple. It has neat, clean rooms with mismatched furnishing. Friendly, quiet and cheap.

Hotel Centrale (☎ 0923 95 17 77; www.hotelcentrale.marsala.it; Via Salinisti 19; r per person €35; Ⓟ ☹) A simple hotel in an excellent location near Porta Nuova. It's run by a friendly manager and the unexciting rooms, which all have a safe and fridge, are centred on an internal courtyard.

Delfino Beach Hotel (☎ 0923 75 10 76; www.delfinobeach.com; Via Lungomare Mediterraneo 672; s €45-75, d €65-130; Ⓟ ☹ ☹) At the turn-off to Petrosino, a mere 3km south of Marsala, is the sumptuous Delfino, situated on a wonderful sandy beach. Dotted around the gardens, the rooms are cheerfully decorated in blue and yellow and equipped with all modern amenities.

Baglio Vajarassa (☎/fax 0923 96 86 28; www.bagliovarassa.com; Contrada Spagnola 176; r per person incl half board €60) If you have your own car, the Vajarassa winery is a great choice. It's in a traditional manor house 6km north of Marsala, near Mozia, and has lots of good food, wine and traditional furnishings. There are only four rooms in the manor, so booking in advance is a good idea.

Villa Favorita (☎ 0923 98 91 00; www.villafavorita.com; Via Favorita 27; s €65-85, d €95-120; Ⓟ ☹ ☹) This slightly faded 19th-century villa is very popular with families. The accommodation is in small bungalows amid the huge landscaped gardens, and there is a good-sized pool; the hotel also has a good restaurant (opposite). You will find it on the SS115 as you enter Marsala from Trapani.

WINE, SWEET WINE

Fresh out of sherry country in southern Spain, John Woodhouse's 'sweet nose' knew a business opportunity when he smelt it. The soap merchant set up shop in Marsala to market the local wines to the seemingly insatiable sweet palate of 18th-century England, but the only problem was how to get the wine to England without it going bad? He added a dash of pure alcohol and, *voilà*, Marsala's fortified wines were born.

The real success of the wines came when the British Navy used it as an alternative to port in order to supply the sailors' ration of one glass of wine per day. Nelson placed a huge order after the Battle of the Nile (1798), and by the 19th century other entrepreneurs wanted to get in on the action. Benjamin Ingham and his nephew, Joseph Whitaker, set up the first rival winery, exporting to the USA and Australia in 1806. The third big producer was canny Vincenzo Florio, who already owned the Egadi Islands and their lucrative tuna plants. All of the wineries were eventually bought by Cinzano in 1920, which merged them under the Florio label.

Eating

RESTAURANTS

Garibaldi (☎ 0923 95 30 06; Piazza dell'Addolorata 35; meals €20-30; ☹ closed Sat lunch & Sun evening) One of Marsala's Slow Food Movement electees, the Garibaldi is a traditional trattoria that serves a wide antipasti buffet; try the sun-dried tomatoes or the delicious *caponata* (a combination of tomatoes, aubergines, olives and anchovies). The *primi* (first courses) range from fish couscous to fresh pasta with seafood, while the mains are mainly about grilled fish. Don't miss a glass of sweet Marsala for the end.

Il Gallo e L'Innamorata (☎ 329 29 18 50 3; Via Stefano Biliardello 18; meals €35-40; ☹ closed Jul-Sep) Perfect for simple but fabulously delectable dishes, this fun little restaurant (another bearer of the Slow Food Movement badge) serves up fun starters such as *arancinette* (small deep-fried rice balls) stuffed with meat or fish, homemade ravioli, and fresh pasta with sardines or *ricci* (sea urchin meat). Tuna and swordfish dominate the mains; try the *involtini de pesce spada* (swordfish roulade stuffed with bread-crumbs). For dessert, try the *testa di Turco* (Turk's head; blancmange with puff pastry in the middle) or, if that's too sweet, go for a – you guessed it – glass of Marsala.

Villa Favorita (☎ 0923 98 91 00; Via Favorita 27; meals €35-40; ☹ 8-11pm) The most classy eating option in Marsala is the restaurant on the beautiful terrace of this Liberty-style villa. Eat beneath a canopy of tree branches and sample a whole range of dishes drenched in Marsala wine.

An excellent option in the historic centre, **Divino...Rosso** (☎ 0923 71 17 70; Via XI Maggio; pizzas €6.50-10; ☹ 7-11pm) is a restaurant-cum-wine bar serving superb pizza. Try the *prosciutto*

crudo con rucola (Parma ham with rocket) or something with fresh tomatoes. Dine out on the pavement, overlooked by the imposing Palazzo Fici.

our pick **La Sirena Ubriaca** (☎ 328 10 53 52 2; www.sicilywine.com; Via Garibaldi 39; aperitivi €8) is a great place for predinner aperitivi and snacks, with a fantastic selection of wine, olive oil, dips and other local delicacies. You can sit at the bar or at the outside tables, and taste the wine/oil/pesto, which you can later purchase.

CAFÉS

Pasticceria di Gianfranco Vivona (Via Stefano Biliardello 21; sweets from €1.50) One of the better places for sweets and traditional cakes. The almond biscuits are perfect for taking home.

Caffetteria Grand Italia (☎ 0923 95 68 28; Piazza della Repubblica 3; sandwiches €3.50; ☹ closed Sun) This is one of the most popular cafés in Marsala, though its customers are mainly in the 80-plus age bracket. It has a good-value *tavola calda* (hot table) and some mean ice creams.

SELF-CATERING

Marsala's open-air fresh produce **market** (☹ morning) is held on a square off Piazza dell'Addolorata, situated next to the municipal offices.

Shopping

Marsala likes its wine (even the non-Marsala sort), and it's the best place to sample and purchase wines from the region. *Enoteche* can be particularly helpful in this regard.

Cantine Florio (☎ 0923 78 11 11; fax 0923 98 23 80; Lungomare Florio; ☹ 3-5pm Mon-Thu, 10am-noon Fri) On the road to Mazara del Vallo, this is the place to buy the cream of Marsala's wines.

Florio opens its doors to visitors to explain the process of making Marsala, giving them a taste of the products; fax to make a reservation for one of the tours. Take bus 16 from Piazza del Popolo.

Enoteca Miriade di Sapori (Via Garibaldi 30) This little *enoteca* offers good wines for tasting in convivial surroundings.

Getting There & Away

There are buses from Trapani (€3, 30 minutes, eight daily Monday to Friday), Agrigento (€10, four hours, three daily Monday to Saturday, one Sunday) and Palermo (€8, 2½ hours), but the best way to travel along this part of the coast is by train. Palermo buses arrive at Piazza del Popolo, off Via Mazzini, in the centre of town. All other buses stop at the bus station in Piazza E Pizzo, in front of the train station.

Regular trains serve Marsala from Trapani (€3, 30 minutes, 20 daily), Mazara del Vallo (€2.30, 20 minutes, 10 daily) and Palermo (€8, three hours, six daily).

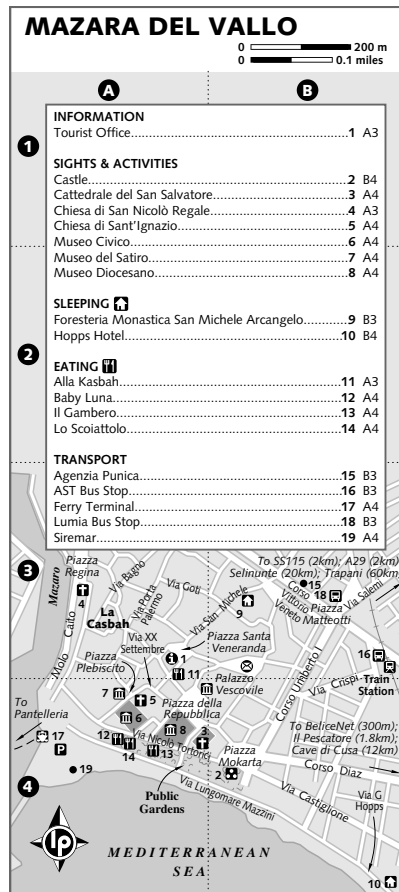
Between June and September, **Sandokan** (☎ 0923 71 20 60, 0923 95 34 34) runs a service from Molo Dogana to the Egadi Islands (Favignana €5.30). Ustica Lines also runs daily hydrofoils to the islands (Favignana and Levanzo €5.30, to Marettimo €11.80).

MAZARA DEL VALLO

pop 50,700

Mazara's old quarter is like a North African kasbah (in fact, it's known as La Casbah), full of narrow little streets that go around each other, and sprinkled with magnificent baroque and Norman-period buildings. It's small enough that you won't ever really get lost, and the dilapidated old buildings give it a rugged charm (though some renovations would be welcomed). This little town is a fantastic spot to see Sicily's North African face, and to get away from the tourist trail almost completely.

Mazara was one of the key cities of Saracen Sicily and the North African influence is still strongly felt here – the town is said to have one of the highest percentages of immigrants in Italy, with hundreds of people from Tunisia and Maghreb arriving annually, mainly to work on Mazara's fishing fleet. Most of the immigrants live within the labyrinth of the old town streets, giving the town a really multicultural feel.



Orientation

Mazara's main street, Corso Umberto I, runs north-south from Piazza Matteotti down to Piazza Mokarta on the waterfront. La Casbah is in the old city, northwest of Piazza Mokarta. The train station is east of Corso Umberto I.

Information

Banks and ATMs can be found on Piazza Mokarta.

BeliceNet (☎ 0923 90 98 40; per 30min €3; Via Castelvetro 4; ☎ 9.30am-1pm & 4.30-9pm Mon-Sat) Has a good number of fast computers.

Tourist office (☎ 0923 94 17 27; www.comune.mazara-del-vallo.tp.it in Italian; Piazza Santa Veneranda; ☎ 8am-2pm Mon-Sat, & 3-6pm Wed) In the historic centre.

Sights

MUSEO DEL SATIRO & MUSEO CIVICO

For a city that has such a rich history, Mazara's sights are few and sometimes badly maintained. The exception to this is the **Museo del Satiro** (☎ 0923 93 39 17; Piazza Plebiscito; admission €6; ☎ 9am-2pm & 3-7pm), held in the deconsecrated shell of the Chiesa di Sant'Egidio.

Even if you drive into Mazara, curse the lack of signs and want to get the hell out of there, you must go to this museum and watch the fascinating video about its prize piece, the bronze statue *Il Satiro Danzante* (the Dancing Satyr). It is really exciting – don't peek at the statue before you see the video! In Italian, with English subtitles, it tells the story of how a bunch of fishermen, only 40km off the shores off Tunisia, pulled up the bronze leg of a statue. Time elapsed and they continued to fish there wondering if they would ever find the rest of the statue. Extraordinarily, they did in 1998. Overcome by romanticism, Captain Giuseppe Asaro tells the camera: 'Lying on the deck with its face turned to the sky, it looked like someone who'd clung on, waiting to be rescued'. What followed was 4½ years of painstaking restoration, during which time Mazara strenuously tussled with the powers in Rome to ensure the return of the city's satyr, which only came home in 2003.

And what a beauty. It is believed to be a rare original casting, and is the only statue of its kind depicting a bacchanalian satyr, dancing wildly like a whirling dervish, arms outstretched, head flung back, the centrifugal force evident in his flowing hair. It is supported by a clever internal structure that allows it to stand upright, towering over bemused tourists who try to sneak forbidden photos.

The **Museo Civico** (Civic Museum; ☎ 0923 94 17 77; Piazza Plebiscito 2; admission free; ☎ 9am-1pm daily & 3-6pm Tue & Thu, 4-7pm Sat & Sun) is on the same piazza, and houses a small collection of sculpture, local paintings and Roman artefacts. Next to it is the baroque **Chiesa di Sant'Ignazio**.

PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA

Nothing else in Mazara even comes close to the Museo del Satiro but it is pleasant enough to wander around the town, and the central piazza, Piazza della Repubblica, is an attractive set piece. Stick your head in the 11th-century **Cattedrale del San Salvatore** (Piazza della Repubblica; admission free), which was completely

rebuilt in the 17th century in the baroque style. Over the portal is a relief from the 16th century of Count Roger trampling a Saracen. Inside, there is a heavily ornamented altar featuring the Transfiguration, surrounded by a bevy of statues by Domenico and Antonello Gagini, and stuccowork by Antonio Ferraro. In the chapel to the right of the altar is a rare 13th-century painted cross.

Other buildings on the square include the elegant, two-storey Seminario dei Chierici (dating from 1710); it houses the **Museo Diocesano** (Diocesan Museum; ☎ 0923 90 94 31; Via dell'Orologio; admission free; ☎ 9am-1.30pm Mon-Sat), whose library contains a number of 18th-century texts.

NORMAN MONUMENTS & LA CASBAH

On Piazza Mokarta, the ragged remains of Count Roger's Norman **castle** have definitely seen better days, although their forlorn ruin is wonderfully atmospheric at night (when they are floodlit). The same goes for the two little **Chiesa di San Nicolò Regale** (Porta Palermo; admission free), which overlooks the bustling fish market. A perfect cube, it has remained virtually unchanged since its construction in 1124.

Northwest of the church is **La Casbah**, a maze of tiny streets and alleyways that was once the heart of the Saracen city. The most important street was **Via Bagno**, the old city's main thoroughfare, which still has its *hammam* (public baths). Today, the area is run-down but interesting, if only because it retains a strong Arab connection through the Tunisians who now live here.

Sleeping

Mazara is a business town with few hotels.

Foresteria Monastica San Michele Arcangelo (☎ /fax 0923 90 65 65; www.foresteriasanmichele.com in Italian; Piazza San Michele Arcangelo 6; dm €15-30, d €30-50) Essentially a youth hostel, this central place is set in a converted monastery with a lovely exterior. Its rooms are simple, but have a kindly atmosphere. Enter at the side.

Hopps Hotel (☎ 0923 94 61 33; www.hoppshotel.it; Via G Hopps 29; s €52-68, d €75-95; ☎ ☎ ☎) Set around a nice pool, this is a big, white, modern hotel with a good seafront location. Rooms are comfortable, with olive bedspreads and apricot walls, and the service is very friendly and efficient.

DETOUR: CAVE DI CUSA

From Castelvetroano take the SS115 south through wine-making country to Campobello di Mazara. Turn off at Principe-Torre Cusa to head for the Greek quarries, known as the Cave di Cusa (or Rocche di Cusa), where most of Selinunte's buttery yellow stone was hewn. The site is charming – overgrown and wild, it's the domain of foraging goats nibbling the wildflowers.

Round about are huge column drums forever awaiting transport to Selinunte. About 400m in from the gate are two carved columns ready for extraction. Around each is a gap of 50cm to allow the stonemason access to the column. When removed, the columns would have been transported to Selinunte across wooden logs by oxen or slaves. Archaeology aside, the site is perfect for a picnic.

Eating

Eating well in Mazara isn't much of a problem. Head to the public gardens on Via Lungomare Mazzini for a host of restaurants and bars, all with terraces overlooking the water:

Lo Scoiattolo (☎ 0923 94 63 13; Via Lungomare Mazzini; meals €20-25; ☹ closed Thu) This spot has reasonable prices and pretty good food. The antipasto buffet is a vegetarian dream, and the pasta and fish are good, too. Pizza is served in the evenings.

Il Pescatore (☎ 0923 94 75 80; Via Castelvetroano 191; meals €25-30; ☹ closed Mon) Gourmets gather at Il Pescatore, Mazara's best restaurant, to sample the delectable fish. The restaurant is an elegant affair and the service is impeccable.

Alla Kasbah (☎ 0923 90 61 26; Via Itria 10; meals €25-30; ☹ closed Mon) For something different, head to the historic centre. The fish couscous here is especially good here, as are the vegetarian dishes.

Also recommended are **Baby Luna** (☎ 0923 94 86 22; Via Lungomare Mazzini; meals €20-25; ☹ closed Mon) and **Il Gambero** (☎ 0923 93 29 32; Via Lungomare Mazzini; pizzas €6; ☹ closed Thu), both on the seafront.

Getting There & Away

AST has buses to Trapani (€4.40, 1½ hours, three daily), Marsala (€2.15, 25 minutes, two daily) and Castelvetroano (€1.65, 20 minutes, two daily). The AST bus stop is beside the train station; you can buy a ticket on the bus. Lumia also has buses serving Marsala, Trapani and Castelvetroano, leaving from Piazza Matteotti; buy your tickets at **Agenzia Punica** (Corso Vittorio Veneto) around the corner.

There are train connections every hour or so with Trapani (€4, 50 minutes), Marsala (€2.30, 20 minutes) and Castelvetroano (€2.15, 20 minutes). Coming from Palermo, you must change at Alcamo Diramazione (€3.85, one hour, 10 daily).

Siremar runs a fast boat to Pantelleria (€34, 2½ hours, one daily) between June and September.

CASTELVETROANO

pop 30,500 / elev 187m

On the road to Selinunte, Castelvetroano is of limited interest save for the small **Museo Civico** (☎ 0924 90 49 32; Via Giuseppe Garibaldi; admission €3; ☹ 9am-1pm & 3.30-7.30pm), home of the *Efebo di Selinunte*, a bronze statue of a young man from the 5th century BC. Up the street, on Piazza Garibaldi, is the 19th-century **Teatro Selinus** (admission free; ☹ 9am-1pm & 3.30-7.30pm), built by Giovanni Battista Basile as a smaller-scale model of the Teatro Massimo (p88), his Palermo masterpiece. It is built on the site of a hotel where Goethe stayed in 1787.

Those familiar with the story of the bandit Salvatore Giuliano might want to check out the completely unremarkable **courtyard** (Via Mannone 94-100) where his body was found in 1950. Norman Lewis gives a fascinating account of the macabre incident – when Giuliano's mother knelt on the ground to lick her son's blood from the paving stones – in his book *In Sicily*.

There are regular bus services to Castelvetroano from various places in the region and around it, including Agrigento (€4.40, two to 2½ hours, three daily Monday to Saturday), Selinunte (€0.77, 20 minutes, five daily Monday to Saturday) and Marsala (€2.40, one hour, three daily).

SELINUNTE

The ruins of Selinunte are some of the most impressive of the ancient Greek world, and the site is one of the most captivating in Sicily.

In its heyday, the huge city had over 100,000 inhabitants, and for two centuries it was one of the richest and most powerful cities in the

world. The spectacular remains of its many temples are proof of its influence.

No visit to Selinunte is complete without a walk along the stunning stretch of beach below, from where there are marvellous views of the clifftop temples. The path down is to the left of the Acropolis parking area.

History

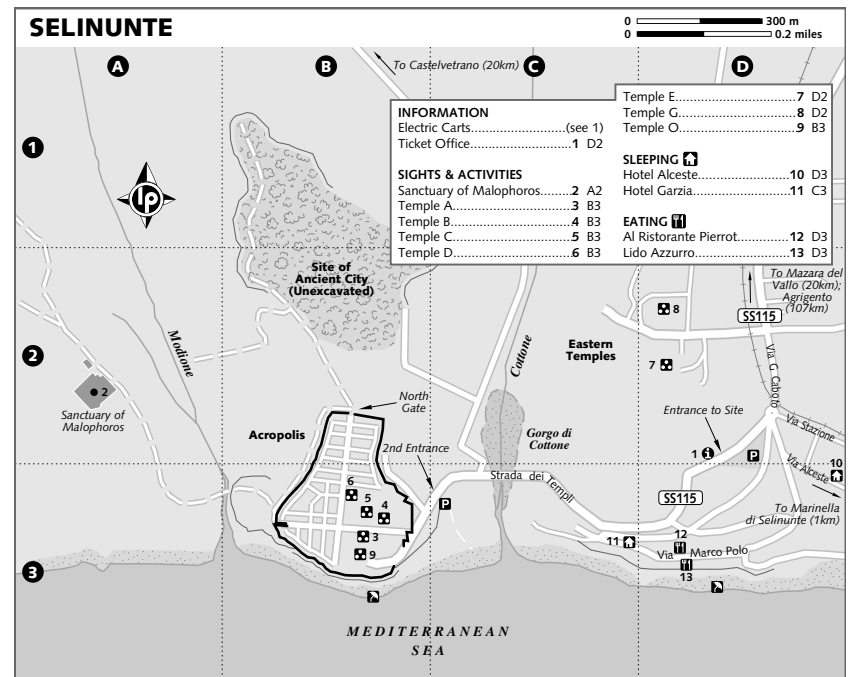
Selinunte was the most westerly of the Greek colonies, established by a group of settlers from nearby Megara Hyblaea in 628 BC. It had a wonderful location atop a promontory between two major rivers (now silted up), the Modione and Cottone, the latter forming a secure natural harbour. The plains around were overgrown with celery (*selinon* in Greek), so the Greeks named their new colony Selinunte.

Originally allied with Carthage, it switched allegiance after the Carthaginian defeat by Gelon of Syracuse at Himera in 480 BC. Under Syracusan protection it grew in power and prestige. The city's growth resulted in a litany of territorial disputes with its northern neighbour, Segesta, which ended abruptly in

409 BC when the latter called for Carthaginian help. Selinunte's former ally happily obliged and arrived to take revenge.

Troops commanded by Hannibal utterly destroyed the city after a nine-day siege, leaving only those who had taken shelter in the temples as survivors; these were spared not out of a sense of humanity but because of the fear that they might set fire to the temples and prevent their looting. In a famous retort to the Agrigentan ambassadors who sought to negotiate for the survivors' lives, Hannibal replied that as they hadn't been able to defend their freedom, they deserved to be slaves. One year later, Hermocrates of Syracuse took over the city and initiated its recovery. In 250 BC, with the Romans about to conquer the city, its citizens were relocated to Lilybaeum (Marsala), the Carthaginian capital in Sicily, but not before they destroyed as much as they could. What they left standing, mainly temples, was finished off by an earthquake in the Middle Ages.

The city was forgotten until the middle of the 16th century, when a Dominican monk identified its location. Excavations began



in 1823, courtesy of two English archaeologists, William Harris and Samuel Angell, who uncovered the first metopes.

Orientation & Information

The archaeological site is divided into the acropolis, the ancient city, the eastern temples and the Sanctuary of Malophoros. It is spread out over a vast area dominated by the hill of Manuzza, the site of the ancient city proper. You can access the site via two entrances: one leads to the eastern temples, while the other requires a 15-minute hike across the depression known as the Gorgo di Cottone.

You can get information about the site at the **ticket office** (☎ 0924 4 62 51; adult/concession €6/3; 🕒 9am-1hr before sunset Mon-Sat, 9am-noon & 3-6pm Sun), near the eastern temples. Just behind the ticket office you can pick up an **electric cart** (per person €5). The carts take you around the whole site, dropping you off at each point and arranging a pick-up time to suit each person.

Sights

THE ACROPOLIS

The acropolis, the heart of Selinunte's political and social life, occupies a slanted plateau overlooking the now-silted-up Gorgo di Cottone. It is crossed by two thoroughfares – one running north-south, the other east-west, dividing the acropolis into four separate sections.

Huddled in the southeastern part are five temples (A, B, C, D and O). The northernmost is **Temple D**, built towards the end of the 6th century BC and dedicated to either Neptune or Venus. Virtually the symbol of Selinunte, **Temple C** is the oldest temple on the site, built in the middle of the 6th century BC. The stunning metopes found by Harris and Angell were once a part of this formidable structure, as was the enormous Gorgon's mask that once adorned the pediment; both of these can be viewed in the Museo Archeologico Regionale in Palermo (p85). Experts believe that the temple was dedicated to Apollo. Adjacent is the smaller **Temple B**, which dates from the Hellenistic period and could have been dedicated to the Agrigentan physiologist and philosopher Empedocles, whose water-drainage scheme saved the city from the scourge of malaria (a bitter irony for William Harris, who contracted the disease during the initial excavations and died soon after). The two other

temples, **Temple A** and **Temple O**, closest to the sea, are the most recent, built between 490 and 480 BC. They are virtually identical in both style and size, and it's been suggested that they might have been dedicated to the twins Castor and Pollux.

THE ANCIENT CITY

Occupying the hill of Manuzza, to the north of the acropolis, the ancient city, where most of Selinunte's inhabitants lived, is the least excavated of all the sites. Exploration of the area has only begun in recent years, and evidence suggests that survivors of the destruction of 409 BC may have used the city as a necropolis.

THE SANCTUARY OF MALOPHOROS

If you walk west from the acropolis across the now-dry river Modione (formerly the Selinon) and up a dirt path, you'll reach the ravaged ruins of the temple dedicated to Demeter, the goddess of fertility. Amid the debris, two altars can be made out; the larger of the two was used for sacrifices. Although they're not much to look at, these are some of the most important finds of the site as they provide an insight into the social history of Selinunte. Thousands of votive offerings to Demeter have been found in the area (nearly 12,000), including stelae crowned with real human heads.

THE EASTERN TEMPLES

North of the site entrance is the most stunning of all Selinunte's ruins, crowned by the majestic **Temple E**. Built in the 5th century BC and reconstructed in 1958, it stands out due to its completeness. It is the first of the three temples close to the ticket office. **Temple G**, the northernmost temple, was built in the 6th century BC and, although never completed, was one of the largest temples in the Greek world. Today it is a massive pile of impressive rubble.

Sleeping & Eating

The nearest town to the ruins is Marinella di Selinunte, where you can find accommodation and a couple of reasonably priced restaurants. The restaurant at the Hotel Alceste is well regarded and serves an extensive menu; there are also plenty of restaurants along the beachfront.

Hotel Alceste (☎ 0924 4 61 84; www.hotelalceste.it; Via Alceste 21; s €45-60, d €70-90; 📍 🗺) This small

family-run hotel has an excellent restaurant and tidy rooms decked out with pine furnishings. It is within walking distance of the archaeological park, and the rooms on the upper floors have sea views.

Hotel Garzia (☎ 0924 4 60 24; www.hotelgarzia.com; Via Antonio Pigafetta 6; s €50-100, d €90-120; 📍) This modern hotel is very close to the ruins and is situated right on the seafront within easy reach of the restaurants. Excellent value.

Al Ristorante Pierrot (☎ 09244 62 05; Via Marco Polo 108; meals €25-30) This place does a fantastic buffet and good fish, and it's so popular that you can hear the contented hubbub down the road.

Lido Azzurro (☎ 0924 4 62 11; Via Marco Polo 51; meals €30-35; 🕒 closed Mon) Teetering right above the water, Lido Azzurro is also recommended.

Getting There & Away

AST and Salemi buses link Marinella di Selinunte to Castelvetrano (€0.77, 20 minutes, five daily), which can be reached by Lumia buses from Agrigento, Mazara del Vallo and Trapani. If travelling by car, take the Castelvetrano exit off the A29 and follow the brown signposts for about 6km. If you're driving from Agrigento, take the SS115 and follow the signposts.

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