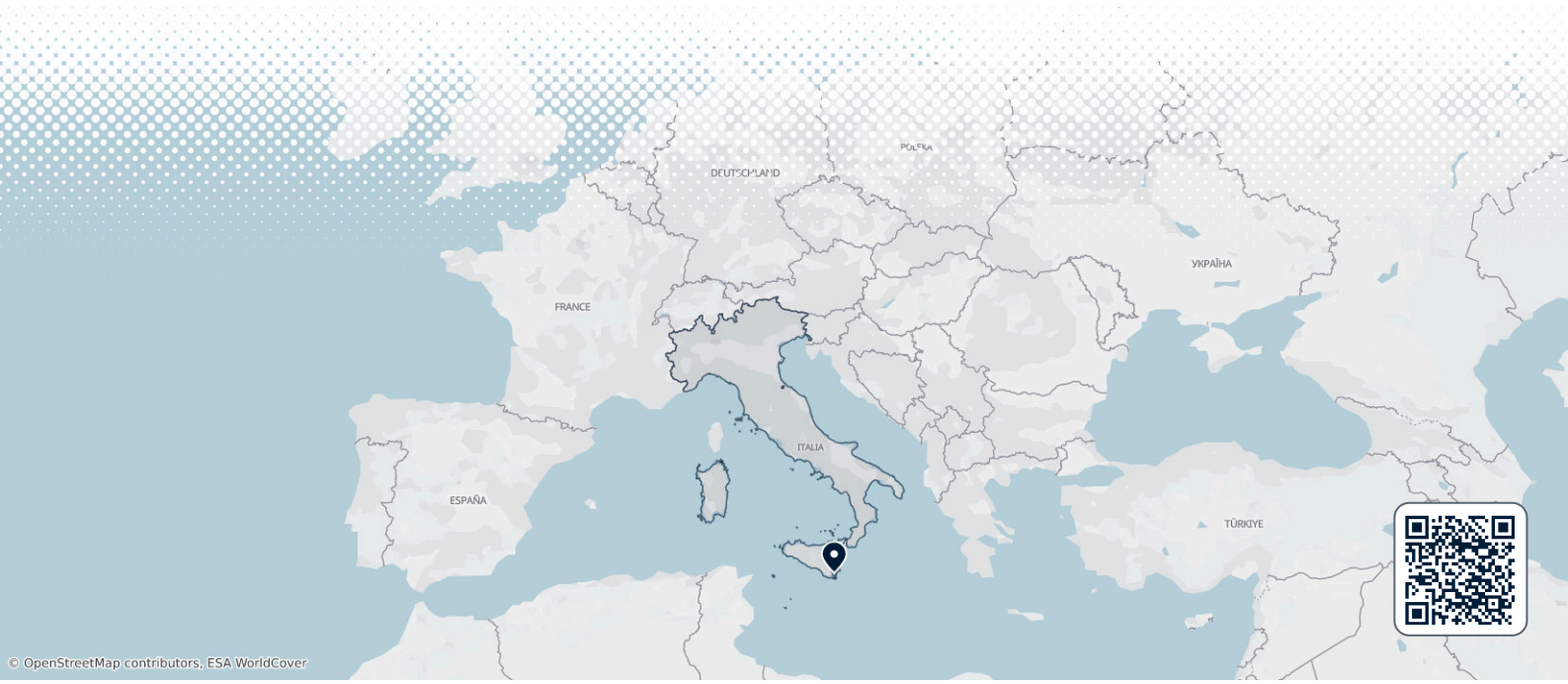


Noto

Sicily · Italy

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Noto is a small hill town in south-eastern Sicily, and a showcase of Sicilian Baroque architecture. After an earthquake destroyed the old town in 1693, Noto was rebuilt on a new site. Its churches, palaces and stairways were all built in the same soft local stone, which turns gold and honey-coloured in the evening light.

The old town is compact, so you can see the main sights in a day. Many visitors stay two or three nights to enjoy the evening stroll, the pastry shops and the nearby coast. Noto also makes a good base for the beaches of Vendicari and the other Baroque towns of the Val di Noto, which share a UNESCO World Heritage listing.

When to visit

Spring and autumn are the best times to visit, with warm days and comfortable evenings for walking. July and August are very hot, so plan sightseeing for the morning and evening and spend the middle of the day at the beach. Winter is mild and quiet, with some rainy days.

The biggest event of the year is the **Infiorata** in mid-May. For a long weekend, artists cover the sloping Via Corrado Nicolaci with large pictures made of flower petals. The weekend also brings a Baroque costume parade and concerts. Expect crowds and book your room early.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Fair Fair for sightseeing	15° / 19° Feels like 11°	7° / 2°	Dry air
February	Good Good for sightseeing	15° / 19° Feels like 11°	7° / 2°	Dry air
March	Good Good for sightseeing	17° / 22° Feels like 14°	8° / 4°	Dry air
April	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 26°	10° / 6°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 31°	14° / 11°	23 sunny days
June	Great Great for the beach	32° / 38°	19° / 15°	25 sunny days · Calm winds · UV 9 (Very high) · Up to 6 days above 35°
July	Great Great for the beach	35° / 40°	22° / 19°	30 sunny days · Humid air · Calm winds · UV 9 (Very high) · Up to 17 days above 35°
August	Great Great for the beach	35° / 40°	23° / 20°	28 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds · UV 8 (Very high) · Up to 14 days above 35°
September	Great Great for the beach	30° / 35°	20° / 16°	20 sunny days · Humid air
October	Great Great for sightseeing	25° / 30°	16° / 12°	
November	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 24°	12° / 8°	Dry air
December	Good Good for sightseeing	16° / 20° Feels like 13°	9° / 4°	Dry air

Best months: April, May, October, November

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



A Noto Cathedral stands at the top of a wide flight of steps in the middle of town. Its dome collapsed in 1996 and was carefully rebuilt, and the church reopened in 2007.

B Palazzo Ducezio faces the cathedral across the main street. Noto's town hall has a long arcaded front, and you can visit its oval Hall of Mirrors.

C Porta Reale marks the eastern entrance to the old town. The gate was built in 1838 for a visit by King *Ferdinand II*. From here, Corso Vittorio Emanuele leads past most of the main churches and palaces.

D Palazzo Nicolaci is famous for its balconies. Their stone supports are carved as horses, lions, sirens and grotesque faces. Look up from Via Corrado Nicolaci, or buy a ticket to see the rooms inside.

E Chiesa di San Domenico has a curved, two-level facade by *Rosario Gagliardi*. It overlooks Piazza XVI Maggio, a small garden square with an 18th-century fountain.

F Chiesa di Santa Chiara has an elegant oval interior. Its roof terrace gives a close view of the cathedral dome and the main street.

G Chiesa di San Carlo al Corso is another Baroque church on the main street. You can climb its bell tower for a view over the rooftops of the old town.

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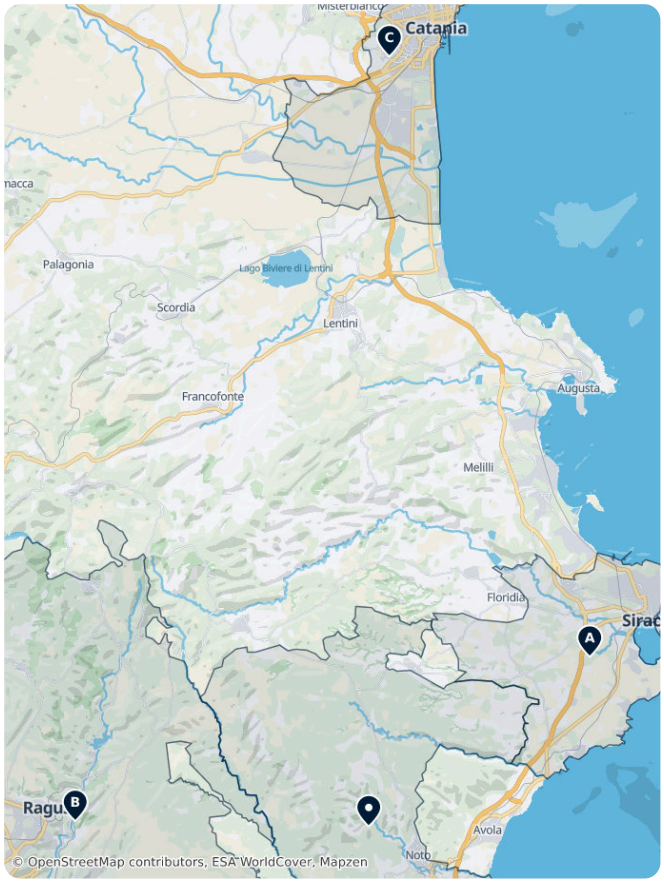
What to experience

Life in Noto moves slowly, and the best moments are about the light, the stone and the evenings.

- **Join the evening passeggiata**: after sunset, families stroll up and down Corso Vittorio Emanuele, past the floodlit churches and palaces.
- **Join the feast of San Corrado**: twice a year, in February and in late August, the silver casket with the relics of the patron saint is carried through the streets in a long procession.
- **Watch flamingos at Vendicari**: from autumn to spring, flamingos and herons feed in the lagoons of the reserve. Wooden hides along the paths let you watch them up close.

Day trips

Noto sits between the sea and the limestone hills of south-eastern Sicily. Many of the best day trips are less than an hour away, but a car makes most of them much easier.



- Villa Romana del Tellaro — about 20 minutes by car. A late Roman country house with colourful floor mosaics, usually closed on Mondays. It pairs well with the Greek ruins of Eloro by the sea.
- Vendicari Nature Reserve — about 20–25 minutes by car. A protected coast with lagoons, an old tuna fishery and sandy beaches such as Spiaggia di Calamosche. Entry is paid.
- Noto Antica — about 25 minutes by car. The ruins of the town destroyed in 1693 lie on a quiet hilltop among trees and wild flowers.
- Ⓐ Syracuse — about 35 minutes by car or train. Greek temples, a huge ancient theatre and the island old town of Ortigia.
- Cava Grande di Cassibile — about 40 minutes by car. A deep canyon with a steep path down to green river pools for swimming. Entry is paid, and good shoes are essential. The path can close in high fire risk, so check that it is open before you go.
- Marzamemi — about 40 minutes by car. A small fishing village with a square built around an old tuna fishery, busy on summer evenings.
- Modica and Ⓑ Ragusa — about 40 minutes and 1 hour by car. Two more Baroque towns on steep hillsides. Modica is known for its grainy chocolate.
- Ⓒ Catania — about 1 hour 15 minutes by car, longer by bus. A big, lively city built of black lava stone, with a famous fish market.

Where to explore

Noto is one of the Baroque towns of south-eastern Sicily, close to the coast and to the larger cities of the east.

- **Baroque towns and the south-east**: Ragusa and Syracuse.
- **Heading north**: Catania, Mount Etna and Taormina.
- **Across the island**: Palermo and Cefalù.

Getting there

- **By air**: Catania Fontanarossa Airport (CTA) is the nearest airport, about 1 hour away by car. Interbus coaches run from the airport to Noto several times a day and take about 1.5 hours. They stop near the public gardens at the eastern end of the old town.
- **By bus**: Interbus and AST coaches link Noto with Syracuse, Catania and the nearby coast.
- **By train**: Regional trains on the line between Syracuse and Ragusa stop at Noto. Syracuse is about 30 minutes away. The station is about a 15-minute walk below the old town. Trains run several times a day, but fewer on Sundays, so check the timetable. Trenitalia

Getting around

- **On foot**: The old town is small, and walking is the best way to see it. The main street is flat, but the side streets climb steeply, with many steps.
- **Buses**: Buses are of little use inside the old town. Regional buses link Noto with nearby towns, but services are limited. Buy tickets before boarding where possible, at a ticket office or in the operator's app.
- **Taxi**: Taxis are few. Ask your hotel to book one, especially for early trains or the airport.
- **Car**: You need a car, a tour or a taxi for most nature reserves, beaches and archaeological sites outside town.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old town is compact and best seen on foot, though side streets are steep with many steps.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Low

Steep streets and busy country roads make cycling hard; most visitors walk in town and drive to the coast.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Not for the old town, which is best on foot. A car is very useful for the beaches, nature reserves and nearby Baroque towns, which buses serve poorly.
- **Restrictions**: The central part of the main street is closed to cars, and nearby streets can have limited-traffic hours. Check the signs before you drive into the old town.
- **Parking**: Use the paid car parks and the blue-line street parking around the edge of the old town, then walk in. Parking is hard to find during the Infiorata and on summer weekends.

Food & drink

Noto is famous for its sweets. Almonds from the surrounding countryside go into almond milk, pastries and granita, the crushed-ice dessert that locals eat with a soft brioche for breakfast in summer. Try cannoli, cassata and the local almond biscuits. Local wines include Nero d'Avola and the sweet Moscato di Noto.

Caffè Sicilia on the main street is the town's best-known pastry shop, open since 1892 and run by the same family. For dinner, look for small restaurants in the lanes just above and below Corso Vittorio Emanuele. On summer evenings, many visitors also drive to the harbour square of Marzamemi to eat fresh fish.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Pizza Margherita
Thin-crust pizza topped with tomato, mozzarella, and basil, invented in Naples and still best there.

DINNER

Spaghetti alla Carbonara
Pasta with egg, cured pork cheek (guanciale), pecorino cheese, and black pepper, a Roman classic.

Risotto alla Milanese
Creamy saffron-infused rice dish from Milan, often served alongside braised veal shank.

Lasagna · Lasagne al Forno
Layered baked pasta with ragu, bechamel, and cheese, a staple of Emilia-Romagna cooking.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Prosciutto and Cheese · Prosciutto e Formaggio
Cured ham paired with regional cheeses, a common antipasto plate found nationwide.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Gelato
Dense, slow-churned Italian ice cream, traditionally lower in fat and air than American-style ice cream.

Tiramisu · Tiramisù
Layered dessert of coffee-soaked ladyfingers and mascarpone cream, dusted with cocoa.

DRINKS

Espresso · Caffè
A short, strong shot of coffee drunk quickly, usually standing at a bar counter.

Wine · Vino
Italy is one of the world's largest wine producers, with regional styles from Piedmont's Barolo to Tuscany's Chianti.

Aperol Spritz
A bittersweet orange aperitif mixed with prosecco and soda water, a staple of the early-evening aperitivo.

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Safety & health

Noto is a very safe town for visitors. Normal care is enough, especially in crowds during the Infiorata and on summer evenings.

The summer heat is the main risk. Carry water, wear a hat and avoid long walks at midday. Take care on the steep path into Cava Grande di Cassibile, and on smooth stone steps in town, which can be slippery.

History

The first Noto stood on a hilltop about 8 km north-west of today's town. Tradition says it was the home town of *Ducetius*, a leader of the native Sicels in the 5th century BC. The town hall, Palazzo Ducezio, is named after him. Greeks, Romans, Arabs and Normans all ruled the old town in turn.

On 11 January 1693, a huge earthquake destroyed much of south-eastern Sicily, including old Noto. Its ruins survive as Noto Antica. The survivors built a new town on a lower slope closer to the sea. Architects such as *Rosario Gagliardi* and *Vincenzo Sinatra* laid out straight streets and terraces, and designed the churches and palaces you see today, including Chiesa di San Domenico and Chiesa di Santa Chiara.

In 1996, the dome of Noto Cathedral collapsed after years of damage. Its careful rebuilding became a symbol of the town's revival. In 2002, Noto and seven other towns of the Val di Noto were added to the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Italy at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



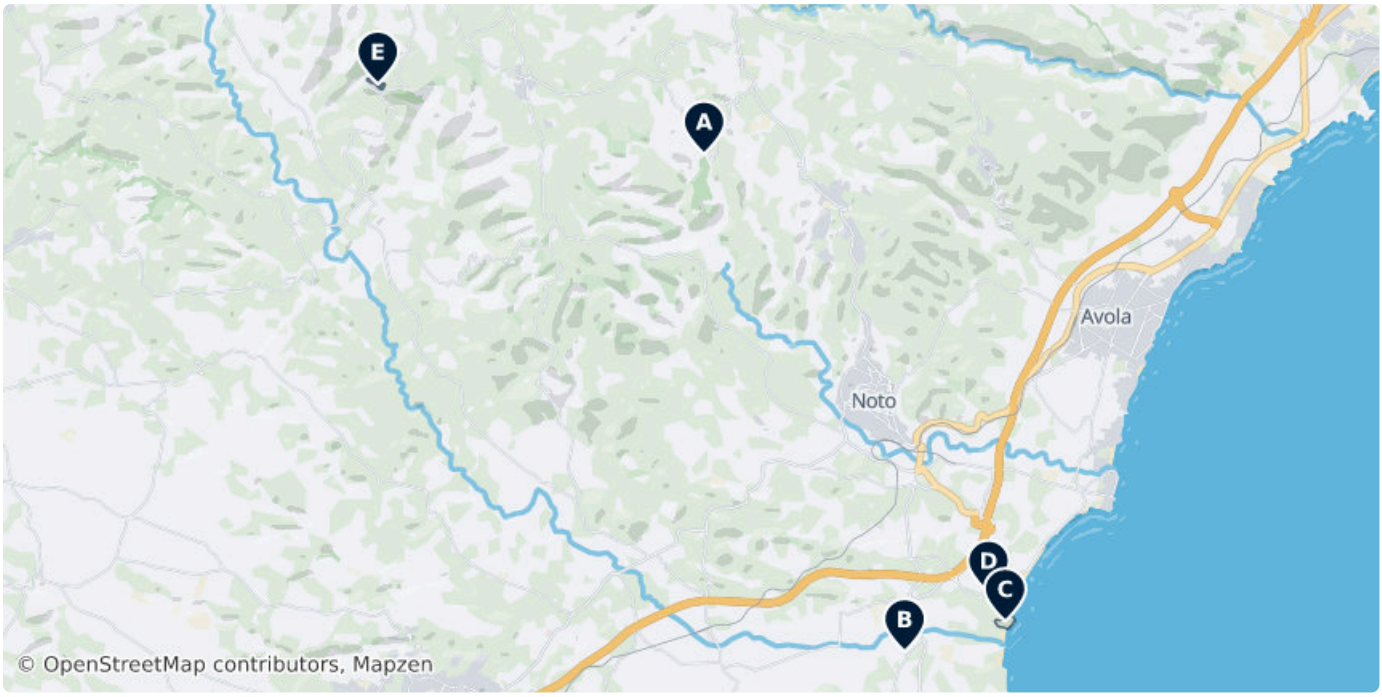
Type C / Type F / Type L
230 V · 50 Hz

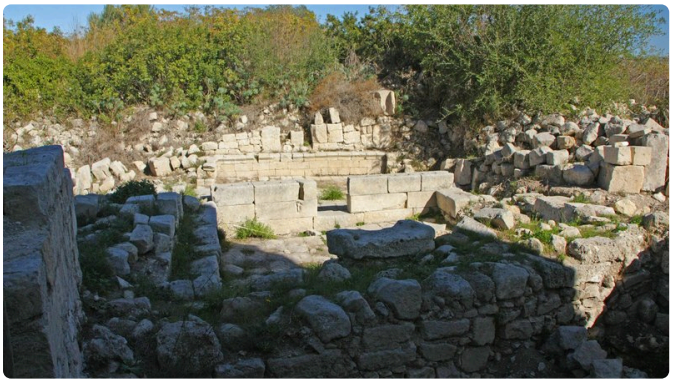
LANGUAGES
Italian

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Ancient Archaeological Sites

Ruins around Noto from the Bronze Age to late Roman times: the old town destroyed in 1693, the Greek city of Eloro and a Roman villa with mosaic floors.





A Netum

The ruins of the old town on a hilltop north of modern Noto, abandoned after the 1693 earthquake and now overgrown with trees.

Strada provinciale Noto-Fiumara-Noto Antica-Testa dell'Acqua-Burlò, 96017 Noto SR, Italy (36.94573, 15.02365)



B Villa Romana del Tellaro

A late Roman country villa south of Noto, with colourful floor mosaics of hunting and mythological scenes.

(Unnamed Road), 96017, Italy (36.83555, 15.07918)

regione.sicilia.it/beniculturali/dirbenicu... , +39 0931 573883



C Helorus

Remains of the ancient Greek city of Helorus on a low hill by the sea, near the mouth of the Tellaro river.

96017, Italy (36.84226, 15.10705)



D Colonna Pizzuta

A tall stone column from the Hellenistic period standing in the fields near Eloro, linked to an ancient tomb.

96017, Italy (36.84850, 15.10246)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

E Villaggio di Castelluccio di Noto

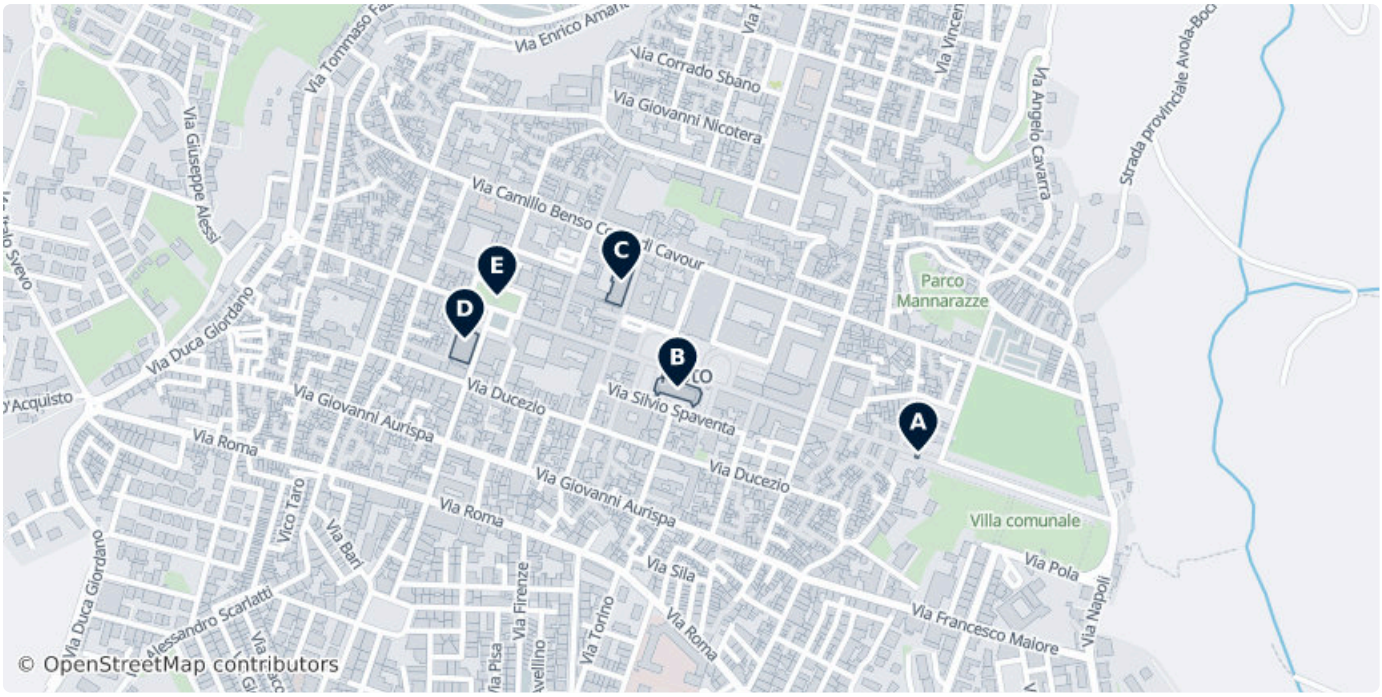
An early Bronze Age settlement and rock-cut necropolis in the hills west of Noto, which gave its name to a prehistoric culture.

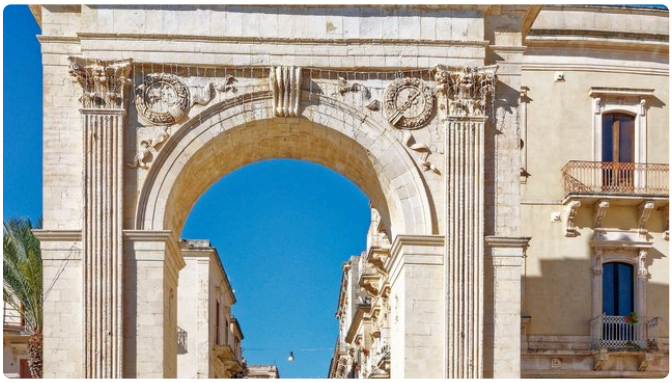
96017, Italy (36.96123, 14.93325)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

Baroque Palaces and Landmarks

The grand gate, palaces, theatre and fountains that line Noto's main street, rebuilt in golden stone after the 1693 earthquake.





A Porta Reale

A neoclassical triumphal gate from 1838 at the eastern end of Corso Vittorio Emanuele, the classic entrance to the old town.

176 Corso Vittorio Emanuele III, Noto 96017, Italy (36.89005, 15.07376)



B Palazzo Ducezio

Noto's 18th-century town hall facing the cathedral, with an arcaded facade and an oval Hall of Mirrors open to visitors.

27 Via Silvio Spaventa, Noto 96017, Italy (36.89075, 15.07053)

comune.noto.sr.it, +39 0931 896111



C Palazzo Nicolaci

An 18th-century noble palace famous for its six balconies carried on carved horses, lions, sirens and grotesque figures.

1 Via Corrado Nicolaci, Noto 96017, Italy (36.89189, 15.06978)

palazzonicolaci.it



D Town theater "Tina di Lorenzo"

The town's neoclassical municipal theatre, opened in 1870 on Piazza XVI Maggio, with a small horseshoe-shaped auditorium.

16 Vico Salonia, Noto 96017, Italy (36.89127, 15.06768)



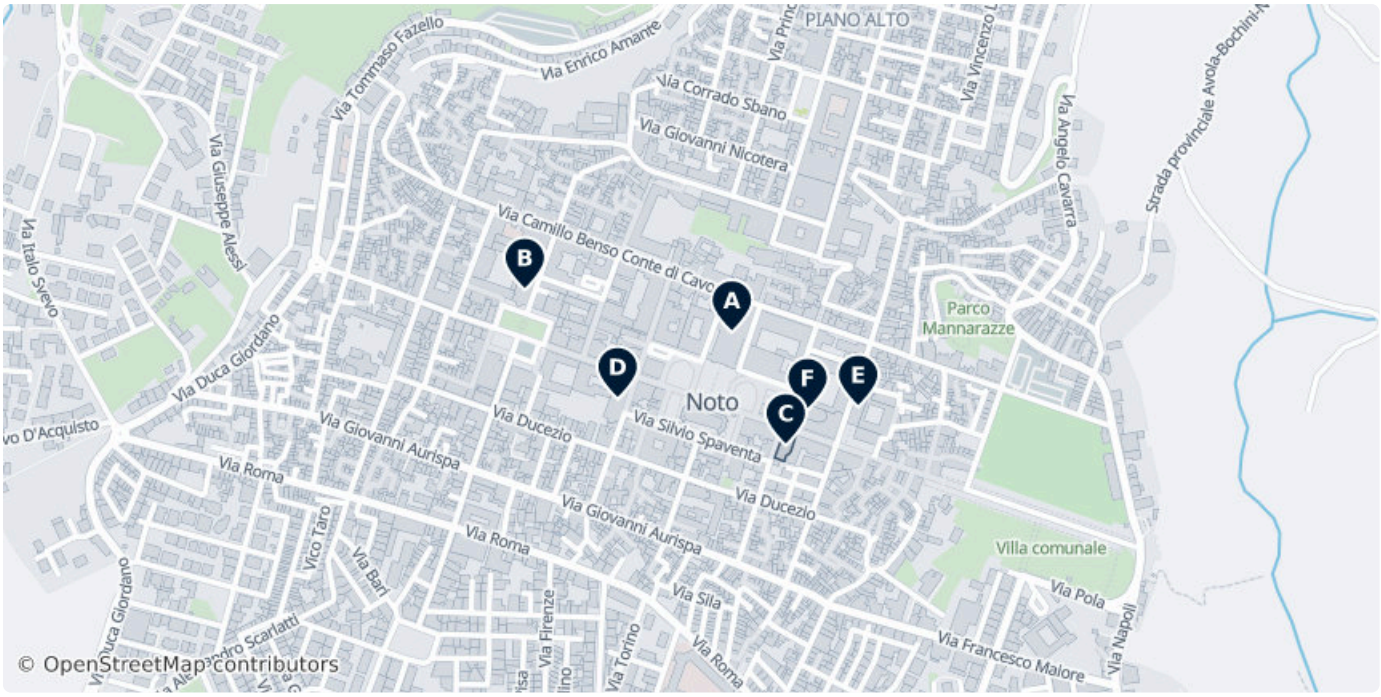
E Fontana d'Ercole

An 18th-century fountain with a statue of Hercules in the garden square of Piazza XVI Maggio, opposite San Domenico.

2 Via Giovanni Bovio, Noto 96017, Italy (36.89173, 15.06811)

Historic Churches of Noto

Six Baroque churches along and above Noto's main street, from the domed cathedral to the curved facade of San Domenico and the roof terraces of Santa Chiara and San Carlo.





A Noto Cathedral

The town's Baroque cathedral of San Nicolò at the top of a wide staircase, rebuilt with a new dome after its collapse in 1996.

11 Via Rinaldo Montuoro, Noto 96017, Italy
(36.89164, 15.07091)

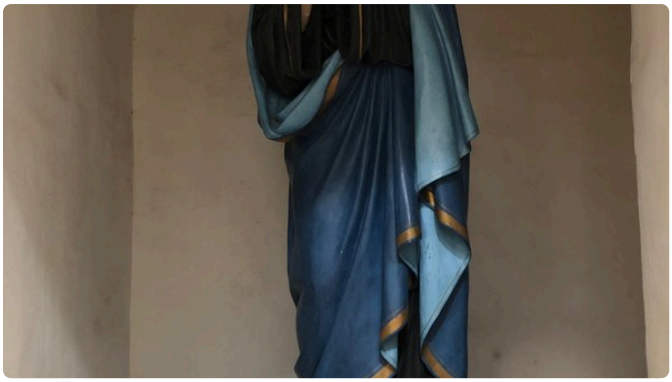
diocesinoto.it



B San Domenico, Noto

Rosario Gagliardi's church with a curved two-tier facade, facing the garden square of Piazza XVI Maggio.

4 Via Giovanni Bovio, Noto 96017, Italy
(36.89210, 15.06814)



C Chiesa di Santa Chiara

A Baroque church with an oval interior by Rosario Gagliardi, whose roof terrace gives views over the cathedral and Corso.

18 Via Pier Capponi, Noto 96017, Italy (36.89043, 15.07163)



D San Carlo al Corso, Noto

A Baroque church on Corso Vittorio Emanuele whose bell tower can be climbed for a view over the town's rooftops.

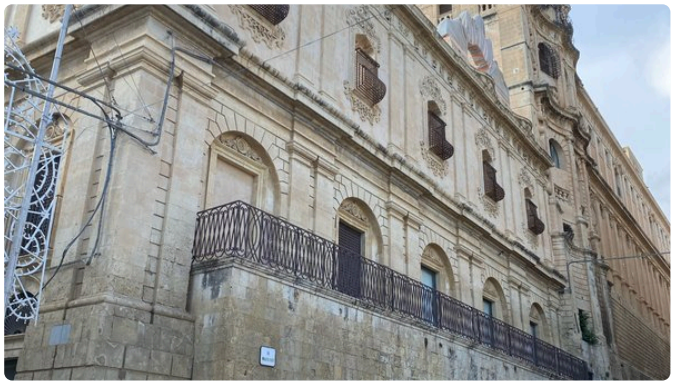
9 Via Arnaldo da Brescia, Noto 96017, Italy (36.89093, 15.06938)



E Chiesa di San Francesco d'Assisi all'Immacolata

A Baroque church at the top of a monumental staircase off the Corso, with a bright white stucco interior.

6 Via Dogali e Saati, Noto 96017, Italy (36.89085, 15.07260)



F Basilica del Santissimo Salvatore

The church of a former Benedictine convent on the Corso, with a tall tower and a richly decorated interior.

126 Corso Vittorio Emanuele III, Noto 96017, Italy (36.89081, 15.07193)

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