

Palermo

Sicily · Italy

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Palermo is the capital of Sicily and one of the oldest cities in the Mediterranean. Phoenicians, Arabs, Normans and Spanish rulers all left their mark. The result is a city of gold-mosaic churches, red domes, baroque squares and noisy street markets, all within a walkable historic centre.

It suits travelers who like history, art and food more than polish. Some streets look worn, traffic is loud, and life spills out onto the pavement. Three or four days give you the main monuments, the markets and a half-day trip to the mosaics of Monreale or the beach at Mondello.

When to visit

Spring and autumn are the best times to visit, with warm days and fewer crowds. Summer is hot and humid, and the hot sirocco wind from Africa can push temperatures much higher for a few days. Winter is mild and rainy, and it is a good time for museums and churches without queues.

The biggest event is the **Festino di Santa Rosalia** in mid-July, the feast of the city's patron saint. On the main night a huge decorated cart is pulled through the old town, and the evening ends with fireworks over the sea at the Foro Italico. Expect big crowds and closed streets in the centre.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Fair Fair for sightseeing	14° / 18°	9° / 6°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
February	Fair Fair for sightseeing	14° / 19°	9° / 5°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Good Good for sightseeing	16° / 22°	10° / 7°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	Great Great for sightseeing	19° / 24°	12° / 9°	Dry air · Calm winds
May	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 29°	16° / 13°	21 sunny days · Calm winds
June	Great Great for the beach	28° / 34°	20° / 16°	24 sunny days · Humid air · Calm winds · UV 8 (Very high)
July	Great Great for the beach	31° / 35°	23° / 20°	28 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds · UV 9 (Very high)
August	Great Great for the beach	31° / 36°	24° / 21°	26 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds
September	Good Good for the beach	27° / 33°	21° / 18°	Muggy, humid air · Calm winds
October	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 28°	18° / 14°	Humid air · Calm winds
November	Great Great for sightseeing	19° / 24°	14° / 10°	Dry air · Calm winds
December	Good Good for sightseeing	16° / 20°	11° / 7°	12 rainy days · Dry air

Best months: April, May, June, October, November

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Cappella Palatina is the city's most famous chapel. It is covered in 12th-century gold mosaics under a painted wooden ceiling in Islamic style.
- B Royal Palace of Palermo houses the chapel and was the seat of the Norman kings. Since 1947 it has also been the seat of the Sicilian regional parliament.
- C Palermo Cathedral mixes Norman, Gothic and baroque styles. Inside are the tombs of King *Roger II* and Emperor *Frederick II*, and you can walk on the roof for views over the city.
- D Church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio, also called La Martorana, has 12th-century mosaics, including one of King *Roger II* crowned by Christ. Next door, the small E Church of San Cataldo has three red domes and a bare stone interior.
- F Quattro Canti is the baroque crossroads at the heart of the old town. A few steps away, G Pretoria Square holds a large 16th-century fountain surrounded by marble statues.
- H Church of San Giovanni degli Eremiti is a Norman church with red domes and a quiet garden cloister.
- I Teatro Massimo is the largest opera house in Italy. Take a guided tour, or book a performance.
- J Catacombs of the Capuchins hold thousands of preserved bodies dressed in their best clothes. It is a strange and moving visit, and not suitable for every child.

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What to experience

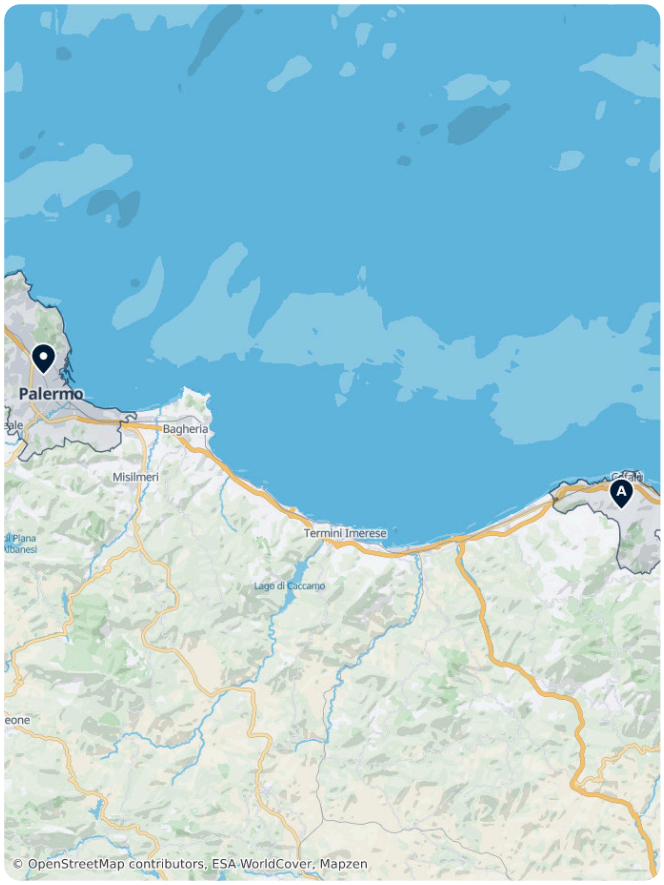
These are things that make a visit to Palermo different.

- **Watch a puppet show.** The Opera dei Pupi uses large armoured puppets to tell stories of Charlemagne's knights. This tradition is on the UNESCO list of intangible heritage. Small theatres in the old town hold short shows, and the Museo internazionale delle marionette Antonio Pasqualino has a collection.
- **Climb to the sanctuary of Santa Rosalia.** An old paved path winds up Mount Pellegrino to the Santa Rosalia Sanctuary, built in a cave. Start early to avoid the heat.
- **Join the evening walk on the seafront.** In the evening, locals walk along the Foro Italico and the Kalsa waterfront.
- **Spend a morning at a street market.** At Ballarò Market, vendors shout their prices in Sicilian dialect over piles of fish, fruit and vegetables. Go before noon, when it is busiest.

Day trips

Palermo is a good base for short trips. These are listed from closest to farthest.

- **Mondello**: the city's beach suburb, with pale sand under Monte Pellegrino. North of the centre, beyond La Favorita park. About 30 to 45 minutes by city bus 806 from Piazza Sturzo, behind the Politeama theatre.
- **Monreale**: a hill town above the city with Monreale Cathedral and its Chiostro Benedettino, with more than 200 carved columns, set in pairs. Gold mosaics cover almost the whole interior of the cathedral. About 30 to 40 minutes by bus 389 from Piazza Indipendenza.
- A Cefalù: a seaside town with a Norman cathedral and a long beach. About 40 minutes to 1 hour by regional train.
- **Segesta**: an unfinished Greek temple and a hillside theatre in open countryside. About 1 hour by car, or a little longer by bus.
- **Erice**: a medieval hill town above Trapani with wide views over the sea. About 1.5 hours by car, or by bus to Trapani and then the cable car.



Where to explore

Palermo is the main gateway to western Sicily. For an overview of the whole island, see Sicily.

- **Along the north coast:** Cefalù is the nearest classic beach town.
- **Farther east:** Taormina and Catania are the bases for Mount Etna and the east coast.

Getting there

- **By air:** Palermo Falcone Borsellino Airport (PMO), also called Punta Raisi, is about 35 km west of the city. The Prestia e Comandè shuttle bus runs about every 30 minutes and takes about 40 minutes to Politeama and 50 minutes to the central station. Regional trains from the station under the terminal take 35 minutes to 1 hour to Palermo Centrale. Taxis charge fixed fares into the city.
- **By train:** Palermo Centrale is the main station. Regional trains run along the coast to Cefalù and east towards Messina. Book on Trenitalia.
- **By bus:** Long-distance buses link Palermo with Catania, Agrigento, Trapani and other Sicilian cities. Most leave from the bus area next to Palermo Centrale.
- **By ferry:** Overnight ferries connect Palermo with Naples, Genoa and other mainland ports. The port is a short walk from the old town.

Getting around

- **On foot:** The historic centre is compact and flat. Most major sights are within a 20-minute walk of the Quattro Canti. Walking is the best way to see the city.
- **Bus and tram:** AMAT runs the city buses and trams. A single ticket is valid for 90 minutes. Buy it before you board at tobacconists, newsstands or in the MyAmat app. You can also buy one from the driver for a little more, with exact coins. A day ticket is good value if you plan several rides. See AMAT.
- **Taxi:** Use licensed taxis from official ranks or call one. Agree on the fare or check that the meter is running before you leave.
- **Cycling:** Traffic is heavy and cycle lanes are few. Cycling is practical mainly along the seafront.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The historic centre is compact and flat, and most major sights are within a 20-minute walk of the Quattro Canti. Pavements are often narrow or blocked by parked cars.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Low

Heavy traffic and few cycle lanes make cycling hard in the centre. The seafront is the easiest place to ride.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** Not for the city. Traffic is chaotic, parking is hard, and most sights are within walking distance. Rent a car only when you leave Palermo to explore western Sicily.
- **Restrictions:** The historic centre is a **ZTL** (limited traffic zone) controlled by cameras on weekdays during the day, and also on some nights in the high season. Driving in without a pass leads to a fine. A daily pass can be bought in the PalerMobilità app. Ask your hotel before you drive in.
- **Parking:** Street parking with blue lines is paid. Use a car park at the edge of the centre and walk in.

Food & drink

Palermo has some of the best street food in Italy. Try **arancine** (fried rice balls), **panelle** (chickpea fritters) in a bread roll, sfincione (a thick, soft pizza with onions and breadcrumbs), and pani ca' meusa, a roll filled with spleen. For pasta, look for pasta con le sarde, with sardines, wild fennel, pine nuts and raisins. Finish with a cannolo, cassata or a granita with brioche in summer.

The best places to eat cheaply are the markets: Ballarò Market, the Capo market and, in the evening, the area around Vucciria Market. For a sit-down meal, the lanes of the Kalsa district and the streets near the Teatro Massimo have many trattorias.

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

Palermo is generally safe for visitors, but petty crime is common. Watch your bags in markets, on crowded buses and around Palermo Centrale station. Carry your bag on the side away from the road, because thieves on scooters sometimes snatch bags. Do not leave anything visible in a parked car.

Some quiet back streets in the old town can feel empty at night. Stay on the busier streets after dark. Traffic is the bigger daily risk: drivers rarely stop at crossings, so cross carefully.

In summer, heat can be intense, especially during sirocco days. Drink plenty of water and plan indoor visits for the hottest hours.

History

The Phoenicians founded the city in the 8th century BC and called it Ziz. The Greeks later named it Panormos because of its large natural harbour. After Roman and Byzantine rule, Arabs conquered the city in the 9th century and made it one of the largest and richest cities in Europe.

The Normans took Palermo in 1072. Their kings kept Arab and Byzantine craftsmen, and this mix created the Arab-Norman style you see in Cappella Palatina, Church of San Giovanni degli Eremiti and the royal pleasure palace of Zisa Castle. In 2015 these buildings, together with the cathedrals of Monreale and Cefalù, became a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Under Spanish rule the city gained its baroque face. In the early 17th century, the crossing of the two main streets became the Quattro Canti. In 1624 a plague struck the city. According to tradition, the bones of Saint Rosalia were found on Monte Pellegrino and carried through the streets, and the plague ended. She has been the city's patron saint ever since.

In the 20th century the Mafia damaged the city badly. In 1992 the judges *Giovanni Falcone* and *Paolo Borsellino* were murdered. The airport now carries their names, and the city has since become a centre of the fight against organised crime.

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

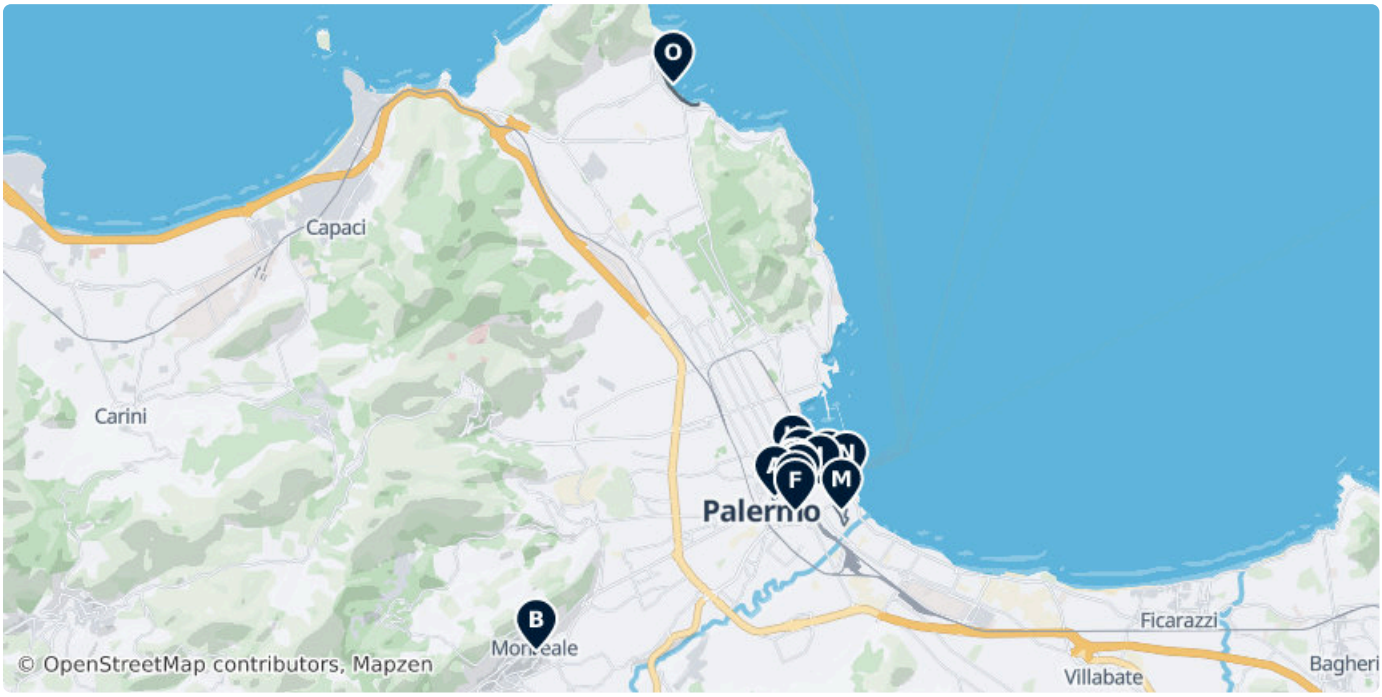
Italian

TAP WATER

Safe to drink

Palermo's Absolute Essentials

Palermo’s core is defined by its UNESCO-listed Arab-Norman architecture, exemplified by the intricate gold mosaics of Monreale Cathedral and the multi-styled Palermo Cathedral. Historic markets like Ballarò and Vucciria offer a sensory dive into Sicilian street food culture, while the Baroque grandeur of Quattro Canti and Piazza Pretoria anchors the city center. Beyond the stone walls, the 18th-century Botanical Garden and the coastal promenade of Foro Italico provide green space, leading eventually to the white sands of Mondello Beach.





A Palermo Cathedral

Historic cathedral featuring a mix of Norman, Arab, Baroque, and Neoclassical architectural styles, recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Via dell'Incoronazione 9, 90134 Palermo, Italy (38.11435, 13.35605)

Mo–Su 09:00–17:30

cattedrale.palermo.it, +39091334373



B Monreale Cathedral

Monreale Cathedral is a Catholic church in Monreale, Metropolitan City of Palermo, Sicily, southern Italy.

Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, 90046 Monreale, Palermo, Italy (38.08213, 13.29255)

monrealeduomo.it, +39 091 6404413



C Church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio

The Church of St. Mary of the Admiral, also called Martorana, is the seat of the Parish of San Nicolò dei Greci, overlooking the Piazza...

Piazza Bellini 3, 90139 Palermo, Italy (38.11474, 13.36287)

+39 345 828 8231



D Quattro Canti

Quattro Canti, officially known as Piazza Vigliena, is a Baroque square in Palermo, region of Sicily, Italy; it is considered the center of...

Piazza Vigliena, Palermo, Italy (38.11565, 13.36140)



E Pretoria Square

Historic square featuring a monumental baroque fountain surrounded by notable architecture and sculptures.

Piazza Pretoria, 90133 Palermo, Italy (38.11548, 13.36208)

comune.palermo.it



F Ballarò Market

The traditional market of Palermo offers fresh fish and produce from Sicily. Packed with tourists but locals still shop there.

Vicolo del Carmelo, 90134 Palermo, Italy (38.11136, 13.36158)

Mo–Su	08:30–12:30, 15:30–20:00



G Vucciria Market

La or a Vucciría is an ancient, large market or bazaar area and neighborhood, with shops and tables selling products, produce, and...

Piazza Caracciolo, 1, 90121 Palermo, Italy (38.11796, 13.36319)



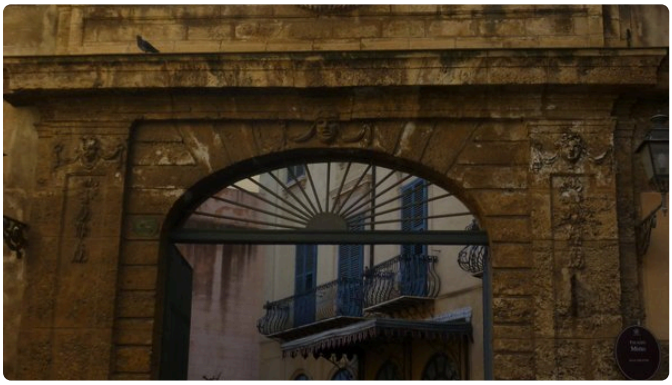
H Antonino Salinas Archaeological Museum

The Antonino Salinas Regional Archeological Museum is a museum in Palermo, Italy.

Piazza All'Olivella 24, 90133 Palermo (38.12081, 13.36078)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Su	09:00–19:00, 09:00–13:00

beniculturali.it/luogo/museo-archeolo... , +39 091 611 6805



I Mirto Palace

The Palazzo Filangeri-Cutò is a Baroque-style aristocratic palace located on via Maqueda 26 in the ancient quarter of Albergheria of...

Via Merlo 2, 90133 Palermo, Italy (38.11657, 13.36818)

+39 091 6164751



J Chiaramonte Palace

Palazzo Chiaramonte-Steri is a Gothic-style palace located on via Piazza Marina, facing the Giardino Garibaldi in the ancient quarter of...

Piazza Marina 61, 90133 Palermo, Italy (38.11754, 13.37013)

Tu–Sa	10:00–19:00

musei.unipa.it/carceri.html, +39 091 607 5306



K Church of the Gesù

Historic Baroque Roman Catholic church notable for its architectural and artistic interior and religious significance.

Piazza Casa Professa 21, 90134 Palermo, Italy (38.11295, 13.36152)

Mo–Sa	07:30–12:30, 16:00–19:30
Su	07:45–13:30, 16:00–20:00

chiesadelgesu.org, +390669700224



L Church of San Cataldo

The Church of San Cataldo is a Catholic church located at Piazza Bellini, in central Palermo, Sicily, Italy.

Piazza Bellini, 1, Palermo PA, Italy (38.11476, 13.36246)

diocesipa.it



M Palermo Botanical Garden

The Orto Botanico di Palermo is both a botanical garden and a research and educational institution of the Department of Botany of the...

Via Lincoln 2, 90133 Palermo, Italy (38.11154, 13.37385)

ortobotanico.unipa.it



N Foro Italico, Palermo

The Foro Italico is a pedestrian path and park along the seafront of Palermo, Sicily, Italy.

(Unnamed Road), 90133, Italy (38.11710, 13.37521)



Mondello Beach

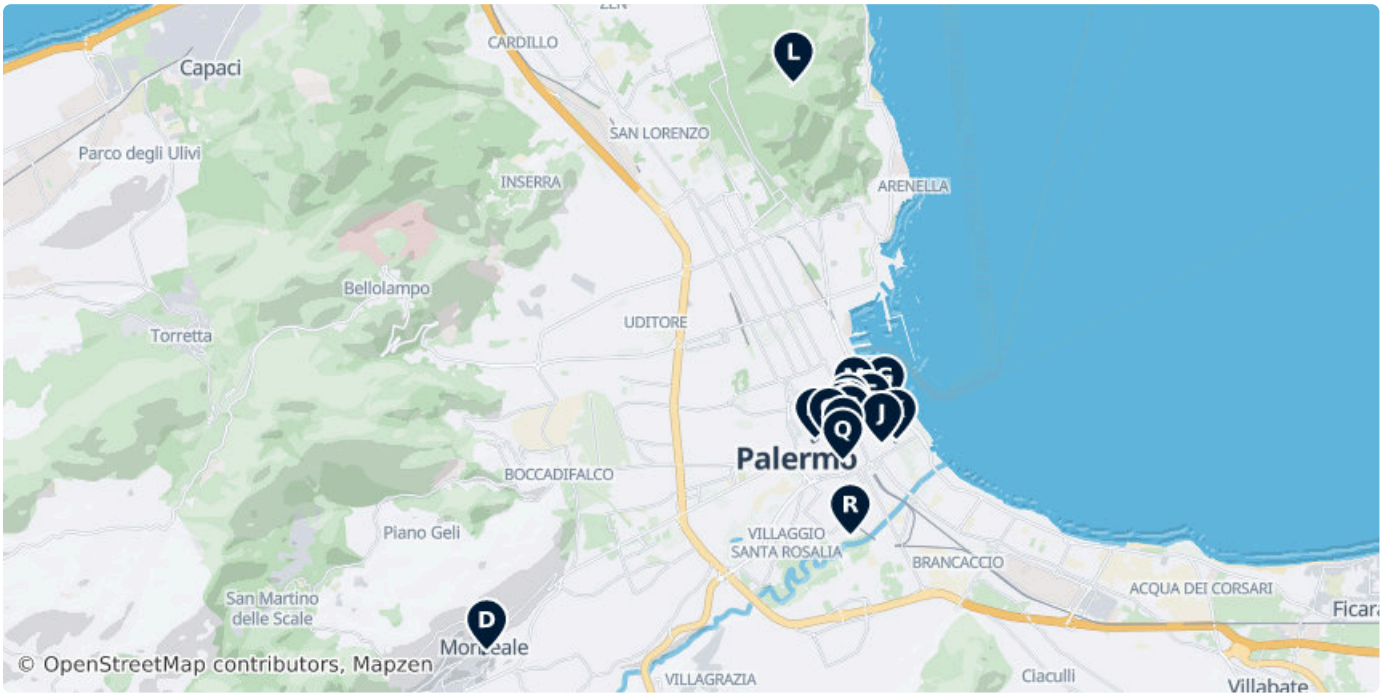
This amazing beach with white sand and gentle slope is a popular place for the residents of Palermo and for the tourists as well.

Italy (38.20091, 13.32903)

palermo.com/things-to-do/beaches/

Palermo's Sacred Architecture

Palermo’s religious landscape is a testament to its multicultural history, featuring a unique fusion of Norman, Arab, Byzantine, and Baroque styles. This collection includes UNESCO World Heritage sites like the Palermo and Monreale Cathedrals, renowned for their extensive golden mosaics and royal tombs. The list highlights the iconic red domes of San Cataldo, the intricate Baroque marble work of Chiesa del Gesù, and the roofless Gothic arches of Santa Maria dello Spasimo. From the mountain sanctuary of Santa Rosalia to the historic Martorana, these sites illustrate the city's complex spiritual and architectural evolution.





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cattedrale.palermo.it, +39091334373



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Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, 90046 Monreale, Palermo, Italy (38.08213, 13.29255)

monrealeduomo.it, +39 091 6404413



E Church of St. Francis of Assisi

The Church of Saint Francis of Assisi is a Gothic-style, Roman Catholic church of Palermo.

Via del Parlamento 32, 90133 Palermo, Italy (38.11663, 13.36684)

+39 091 616 2819



F Church of San Cataldo

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Piazza Bellini, 1, Palermo PA, Italy (38.11476, 13.36246)

diocesipa.it



G Church of S. Maria della Catena

Santa Maria della Catena is a Roman Catholic church located in the Piazza Dogana, now sandwiched between Strada Statale 113 and Via...

Piazzetta delle Dogane, 90133 Palermo, Italy (38.11918, 13.36954)



H Church of Saint Catherine

Santa Caterina d'Alessandria or Saint Catherine of Alexandria is a Roman Catholic church with a main facade on Piazza Bellini, and a...

Piazza Bellini, 90133 Palermo, Italy (38.11553, 13.36259)

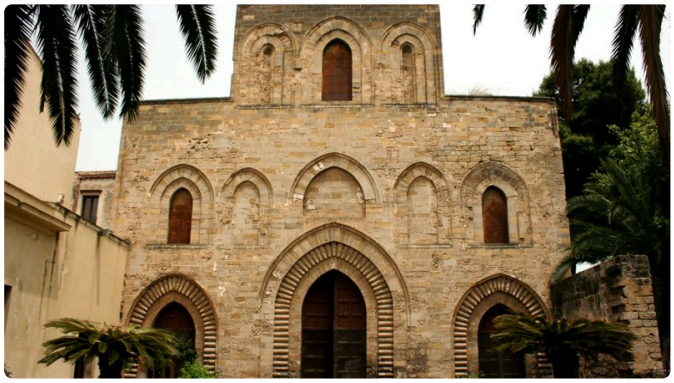


I Chiesa San Giuseppe dei Teatini

San Giuseppe dei Teatini is a Roman Catholic church on via Vittorio Emanuele, at the southwest corner of the Quattro Canti, in the historic...

Via Vittorio Emanuele, 90134 Palermo, Italy (38.11526, 13.36146)

diocesipa.it



J Basilica of the Holy Trinity

La Magione is a 12th-century Norman-Gothic architecture, Roman Catholic Basilica church, located on Via Magione #44, the entrance to the...

Via Magione, 90133 Palermo, Italy (38.11363, 13.36899)

basilicalamagione.diocesipa.it, +39 091 6170596



K Santa Maria dello Spasimo

Santa Maria dello Spasimo, or Lo Spasimo, is an unfinished Catholic church in the Kalsa neighborhood in Palermo, Sicily, on Via dello...

3 Via dello Spasimo, Palermo 90133, Italy (38.11417, 13.37178)



L Santa Rosalia Sanctuary

The Sanctuary of Santa Rosalia is a church and pilgrimage site located on via Bonnaojust outside of the urban neighborhoods of Palermo,...

Via Pietro Bonanno, 90142 Montepellegrino, Palermo PA, Italy (38.16843, 13.35186)



M San Domenico Cathedral

San Domenico is a Baroque-style Roman Catholic church, located on Piazza San Domenico, and located in the ancient quarter of La Loggia, in...

Piazza S. Domenico, 1, 90133 Palermo, Italy (38.11911, 13.36358)

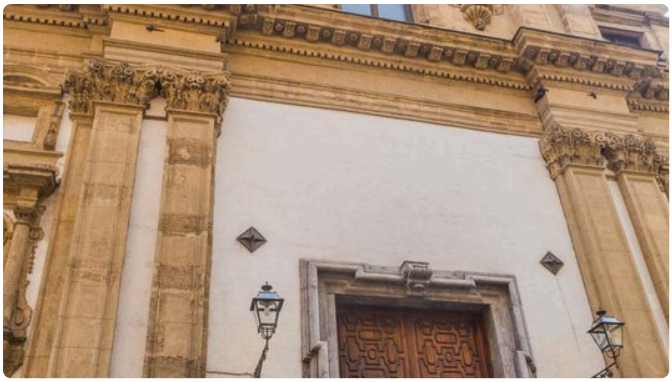
domenicani-palermo.it



N Oratory of San Lorenzo

The Oratory of Saint Lawrence is a Baroque oratory of Palermo. It is located near the Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi, in the quarter of...

7 Via Immacolatella, Palermo 90133, Italy (38.11681, 13.36631)



O Santissimo Salvatore, Palermo

The Church of Most Holy Saviour is a Baroque-style, Roman Catholic church in Palermo, Italy.

3 Via Santissimo Salvatore, Palermo 90134, Italy (38.11435, 13.35877)

guardiedeltempio.com



P Church of San Matteo

The Church of Saint Matthew is a Baroque-style, Roman Catholic church of Palermo, region of Sicily, Italy.

Via Vittorio Emanuele, 257, Palermo, Italy (38.11645, 13.36255)

sicilie.it/sicilia/Palermo_-_Chiesa_di_San_Matteo



Q Church of Carmine

The church of the Carmine Maggiore is a Roman Catholic church located on Piazza Carmine in front of an open market in the city of Palermo,...

Via Giovanni Grasso, 13, Palermo, Italy (38.11107, 13.36144)

guardiedeltempio.com



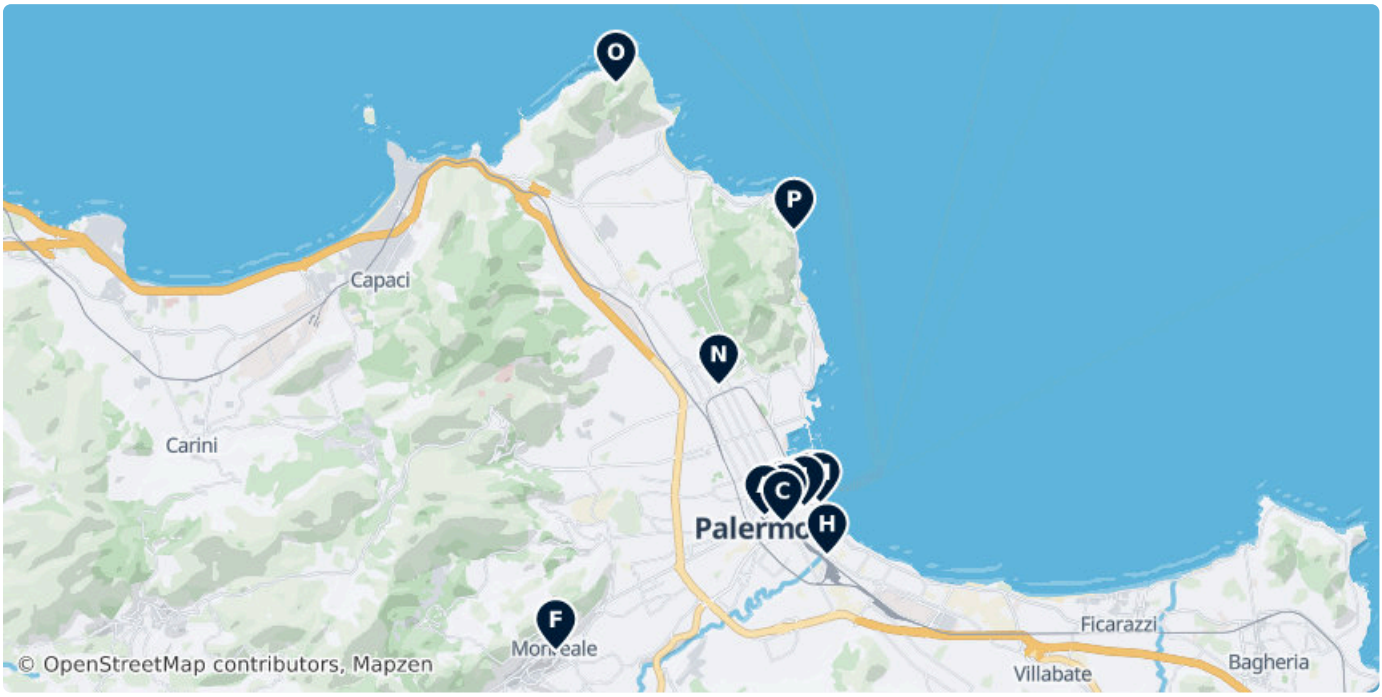
R Santo Spirito, Palermo

The Church of the Holy Spirit is a Norman church in Palermo, Sicily, Southern Italy.

Palermo 90127, Italy (38.09967, 13.36288)

Palermo's Architectural Wonders

Palermo’s architectural landscape is a testament to its layered history, showcasing a unique fusion of Norman, Arab, Byzantine, and Baroque styles. This collection highlights the UNESCO-listed Arab-Norman route, including the gold-mosaicked Monreale Cathedral and the iconic red domes of San Cataldo. Explore the city's civic evolution through the 12th-century Admiral’s Bridge, the intricate Baroque facades of Quattro Canti, and the monumental Pretoria Fountain, all reflecting centuries of cultural exchange within Sicily's capital.





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Piazza Marina 61, 90133 Palermo, Italy (38.11754, 13.37013)

Tu–Sa 10:00–19:00

musei.unipa.it/carceri.html, +39 091 607 5306



H Admiral's Bridge

The Admiral's Bridge is a medieval bridge of Palermo, located in Piazza Scaffa.

223 Corso dei Mille, Palermo 90123, Italy (38.10502, 13.37506)



I Mirto Palace

The Palazzo Filangeri-Cutò is a Baroque-style aristocratic palace located on via Maqueda 26 in the ancient quarter of Albergheria of...

Via Merlo 2, 90133 Palermo, Italy (38.11657, 13.36818)

+39 091 6164751



J Church of St. Francis of Assisi

The Church of Saint Francis of Assisi is a Gothic-style, Roman Catholic church of Palermo.

Via del Parlamento 32, 90133 Palermo, Italy (38.11663, 13.36684)

+39 091 616 2819



K Church of San Cataldo

The Church of San Cataldo is a Catholic church located at Piazza Bellini, in central Palermo, Sicily, Italy.

Piazza Bellini, 1, Palermo PA, Italy (38.11476, 13.36246)

diocesipa.it



L Quattro Canti

Quattro Canti, officially known as Piazza Vigliena, is a Baroque square in Palermo, region of Sicily, Italy; it is considered the center of...

Quattro Canti, 90140 Palermo PA, Italy (38.11568, 13.36147)



M Palchetto della musica

A 19th-century neoclassical bandstand located in Piazza Castelnuovo, designed by architects Domenico Lo Faso Pietrasanta and Antonino Gentile for public musical performances.

15 Foro Umberto I, Palermo 90133, Italy (38.11742, 13.37301)



N Monumento ai caduti noto come "La Statua"

A prominent war memorial in Piazza Vittorio Veneto dedicated to those who fell during the First World War, featuring a tall column topped with a bronze statue of Liberty.

20 Piazza Vittorio Veneto, Palermo 90143, Italy (38.14560, 13.34207)

O il Semaforo

A historic maritime signaling station and lookout tower situated on the coastline, formerly used for naval communication and monitoring the Tyrrhenian Sea.

90151, Italy (38.21774, 13.31089)

P torre del rotolo

A 15th-century coastal watchtower built as part of Sicily's defensive network to protect the shoreline from pirate raids and maritime invasions.

(38.18263, 13.36503)

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