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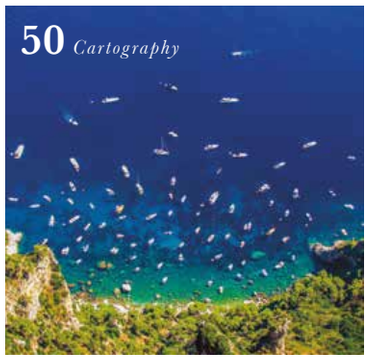

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Tyrrhenian Sea & Ionian Sea

Tyrrhenian Sea

The Tyrrhenian Sea is the wide basin enclosed by the West coast of Italy, the East coasts of Sardinia and Corsica, and the North coast of Sicily. Among the seas that are part of the Mediterranean, it is the most recent one, and as such it is also the most geologically unstable. In the general section about Sicily we have seen that the southern stretch of this sea is crossed by the Tyrrhenian "Ring of Fire". This sea extends up to 300 miles both in latitude and in longitude. Its central portion comprises of a wide abyssal plain with an average depth of around 3300m, descending to 3700m in some trenches. Unlike the abyssal plain of the Sardinian Sea which is completely flat, the Tyrrhenian is dotted with undersea mountains with often very steep walls that rise from the plain for a few thousand meters. A few of these mountains reach the light and form islands; for instance, the island of Ustica, probably one of the oldest, and the Aeolian Islands. Further North, the contour line reaches a depth of 2000m, as much as between Ustica and Sicily. Next to Capo S.Vito a deep submarine canyon almost reaches the shores of the ridge. Conversely, the nearby Capo Gallo to the East extends out into the sea for several miles with a significant shoal. Apart from these exceptions, the shoreline of the island is rather linear, aligned East – West, and, on this side of Sicily, cliffs slope steeply down to 1000m depth. The Tyrrhenian Sea hides many volcanoes in its abyss and although sailors may have a hard time identifying them, the tools of scientific undersea research bring them to light. The Marsili volcano, for instance, is a massive seamount which lies around 40 miles North of Alicudi. It is the biggest volcanic ridge in Europe. Together with Palinuro (30 miles NE of Marsili), Vavilov (100 miles SE of the Gulf of Naples) and Magnani, it constitutes the underwater part of the Tyrrhenian "Ring of Fire". In the Aeolian Islands, which are of volcanic origin, Stromboli and Vulcano are still active, and other volcanic phenomena occur, such as underwater fumaroles. Although very close to each other, these volcanos have different features. Mt. Stromboli, one of the most active in Europe, has explosive eruptions occurring at intervals ranging from minutes to hours. These eruptions usually contain volcanic bombs, ash, and stone blocks. Conversely, Vulcano is characterised by the emission of gas and steam in the fumaroles and by the presence of sulphur. Real

eruptions are rare. In Vulcano Island it is possible to bathe in the outdoor warm mud pools, and take advantage of the benefits of the sulphur mud.

Currents

The western tip of Sicily divides the Atlantic current arriving from Gibraltar into two branches. One of them descends into the Strait of Sicily; the other enters the Tyrrhenian Sea. This northern branch rarely runs along the Sicilian coast. Instead it tends to transit more North, straight from Cape S. Vito to the Italian coast. From there it continues North-West and generates the cyclonic circulation, i.e. anti-clockwise, that characterises the Tyrrhenian Sea. The point at which this current reaches Italy can vary: going from the Calabrian coast, where the Gulf of Naples lies, to the Lazio coast. South of this current branch, there remains enough space for a cell of anti-cyclonic current, i.e. clockwise, to generate. This current runs along the southern part of Calabria and westerly along most of the Tyrrhenian coast of Sicily.
However, this description is purely theoretical, since it does not take into account the action of winds, which always affect the situation. For instance, a prolonged period of Mistral (W - NW) can hold the Atlantic current close to the northern Sicilian coast, thus diverting the coastal flow towards the East.

Winds

On the northern (Tyrrhenian) side of Sicily, the winds that create the biggest seas near the coast are those from the I and IV quadrants, i.e. mainly Gregale (NE) and Mistral (NW). Conversely, Sirocco (SE) and Libeccio (SW) are those winds that make parents shout if their children are getting lost offshore with their raft! Due to the special configuration of this coast, rather high on average, winds tend to align with the coastline. As a result, it is common to come across Levante (E) or Ponente (W). In settled weather, breezes blow from Gregale to Levante (NE and E) in the morning, and stabilise from Ponente and Mistral (W and NW) in the afternoon. At night pleasant land breezes blow. The whole area is generally rather windy, but it is not uncommon for the wind to abate. This can happen at anytime of the year, but especially in winter and spring, or early in the morning in summer. This can coincide with a mist, sometimes thick.

MISTRAL. This wind from North-West is the ` lord `of the western Mediterranean. Along the northern coast of Sicily, its effect is mitigated both by the distance from its natural "source" in the south of France, the Gulf of Lion and Carcassonne, and by the cumbersome presence of Sardinia. It is hence rather rare that the Mistral here is as strong as it can be in the Sardinian Sea or in the Sea of Corsica. The only exception is the western part of Sicily, around the Egadi Islands, where it often blows with real strength. It is statistically more frequent in spring and summer, although I personally have experienced its fury in late autumn, as I describe below. Only in the case of a deep depression with its centre in the Ionian Sea, descending along the Tyrrhenian, would the Mistral reach this area. Alternatively, it can occur during the first phases of an anti-cyclone across the entrance to the western Mediterranean. In this circumstance though, Mistral often gives way to Gregale.

GREGALE. Like all winds from northerly quadrants, the Gregale is generally a "good weather wind", even if sometimes, as for the Mistral, "good weather"

SICILY NORTH COAST

CLIMATE
The northern coast has a mild and temperate climate, with limited seasonal excursions variations. In the east the climate is influenced by the proximity of the continent and the steep interior elevations: there is less wind, it rains more and in winter temperatures are a little lower. In the west, however, the climate is much drier and milder even in the middle of winter, although the winds tend to be stronger and more frequent.

WINDS
In summer the prevailing winds come from the west north west but storms are quite rare. The sirocco, which often blows in winter and in the intermediate seasons, can be dangerous although coming from the land. This is because it is accelerated by the contours of the island and it can arrive quickly and with storm force raising a short and confused sea a short distance from shore. The levante winds are typical in winter and almost completely absent in summer. In the western zone between Capo San Vito and Marsala the winds are more often from the west and are generally more intense because of the bottleneck of the Sicilian Channel (the distance between Marsala and Capo Bon in Tunisia is only 77 miles).

CURRENTS
Along the north coast the current is rather weak and goes westward, but It has no particular effect on navigation. Tidal currents are substantially absent with the exception of the area just adjacent to Capo Peloro and the Strait of Messina.

LANDSCAPE
From Marsala to Trapani the coast is low, uniform and full of lagoons, marshes, salt pans and long beaches. Immediately behind Trapani the land becomes steeper. First we find Mount Erice, on top of which its namesake village is clearly visible, with the Castello di Venere (Castle of Venere); proceeding towards the east, direction Capo San Vito, we find Cofano and Monaco Mountains. To the west of Castellamare, the hills are not very high. As you approach Palermo, the hills become higher and steeper. Monte Pellegrino, just along the coast near Mondello, is typical. The vegetation is scarcer to the west but becomes thicker and greener towards the east. The Madonie Mountains reach their maximum height behind Cefalù, reaching almost 2000 metres. Further east there are the Nebrodi Mountains, also well above 1000 metres. From the Gulf of Tindari to Milazzo, Mount Etna is clearly visible, with its height of 3330 metres and its summit almost always covered with snow. In the stretch of coast between Milazzo and the Strait of Messina, the Peloritani Mountains have a steep and imposing profile. The coast is a continuous alternation of rocky stretches, sandy beaches, and pebble beaches.

DISTANCE BETWEEN THE MAIN PORTS AND MARINAS IN NAUTICAL MILES

Marsala - Petrosino	7
Marsala - Trapani	14
Marsala - Favignana	8
Trapani - San Vito lo Capo	19
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San Vito lo Capo - Castellammare del Golfo	12
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Terrasini - Isola delle Femmine	11
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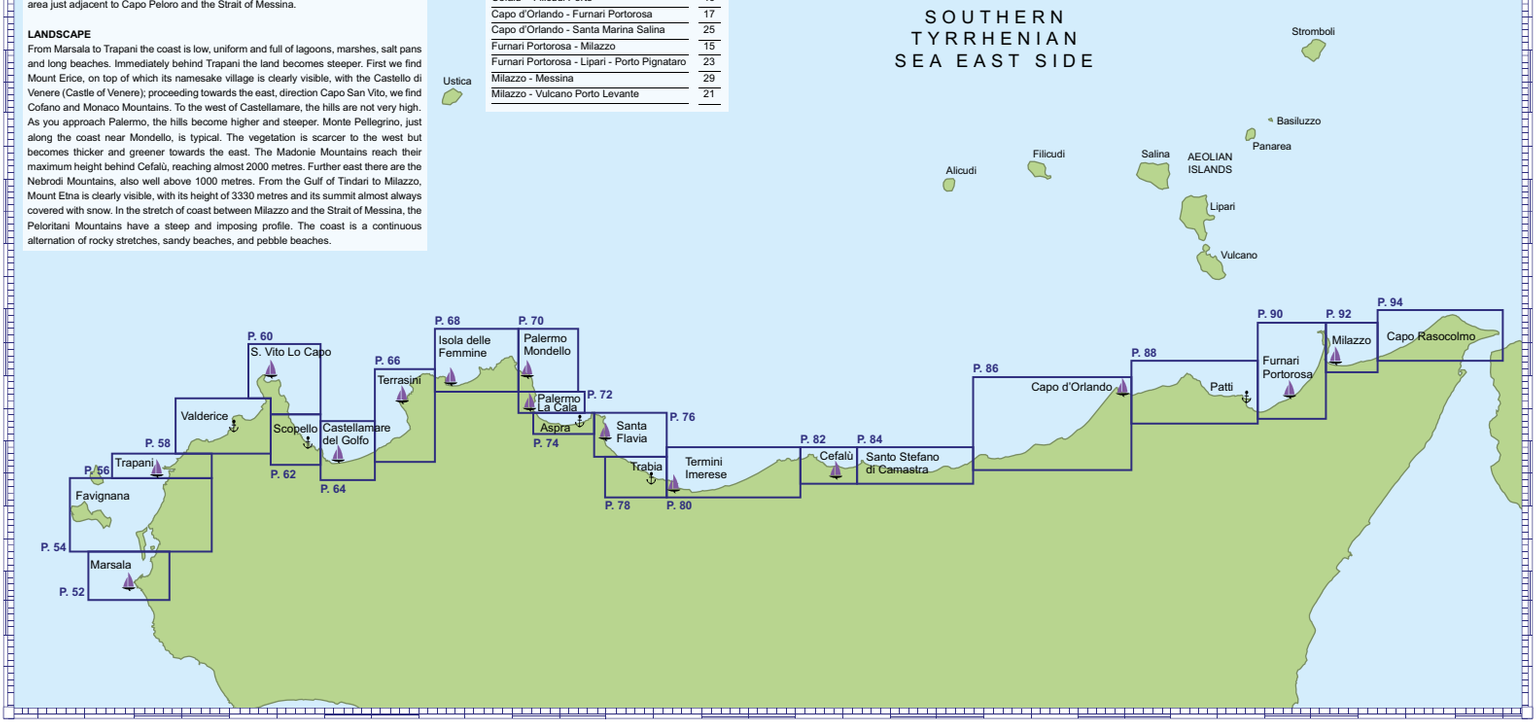


ONSHORE ITINERARIES PAGE 470

PAGE 278 DISCOVER MARSALA

MARSALA - STAGNONE - DOCKS
N 37°48',91 E 012°26',98

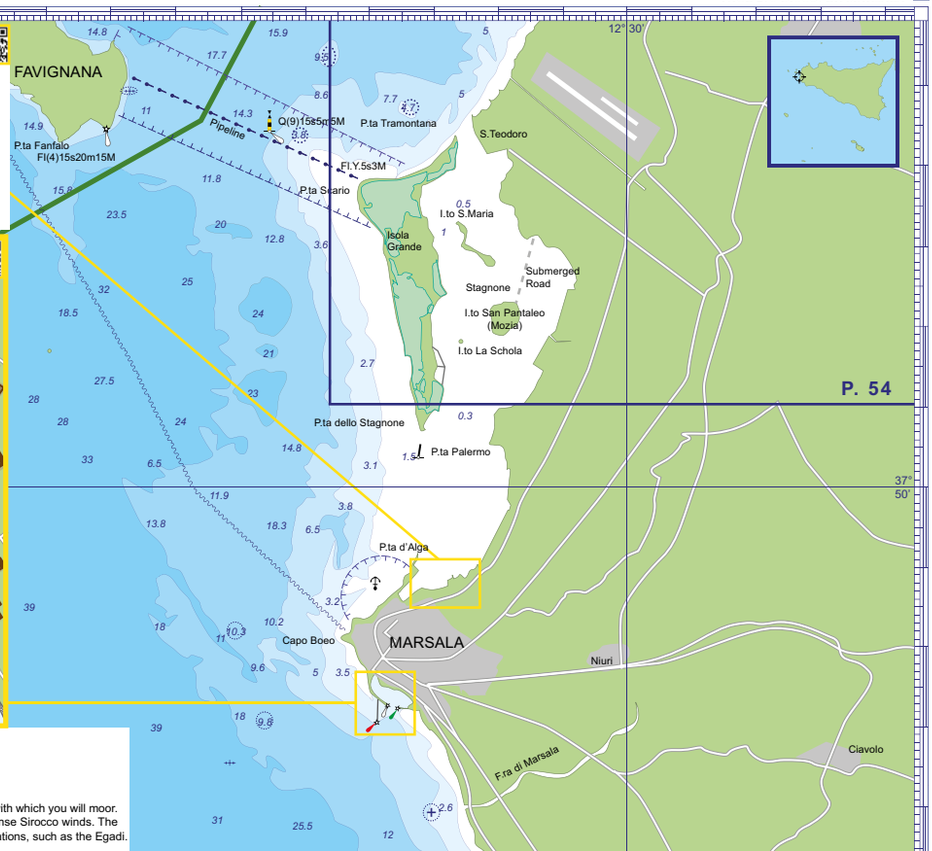
There are jetties for small boats up to 9 metres.

WARNINGS: From the south you can enter the basin skirting Punta D'alga. From the north, keep a distance of half a mile from the coast due to the presence of several shoals.

HARBOUR MASTER'S OFFICE: See Marsala – Lilibeo - Commercial Port

Nautica Il Sole: repair of inboard and outboard engines, of several self-diagnostic makes, boat storage both under cover and open-air. Nicola +39 327 346 3831

Curiosities, Events, Things to see, History and useful Services on page 278.



MARSALA - LILIBEO - COMMERCIAL PORT N 37°47',21 E 012°26',29

Info line +39 091 564 1126 www.boat-mooring.com/4001

328 berths up to 25 mt. - draught 3,6 mt. - VHF *check the website*

At the entrance of the port, if you are approached by some rubber boats, make sure they belong to the company with which you will moor. There are many leisure moorings in the southern part of the port, an area that provides safe shelter from the intense Sirocco winds. The pier where Garibaldi landed, unfortunately lies in a sad state of neglect. Convenient to reach many nearby destinations, such as the Egadi.

the webate boat-experts.com

WARNINGS: Winds from the second quadrant and, to a lesser extent, those from the third cause an undertow. Sirocco winds make the entrance dangerous. The seabed is subject to continuous variations due to silting.

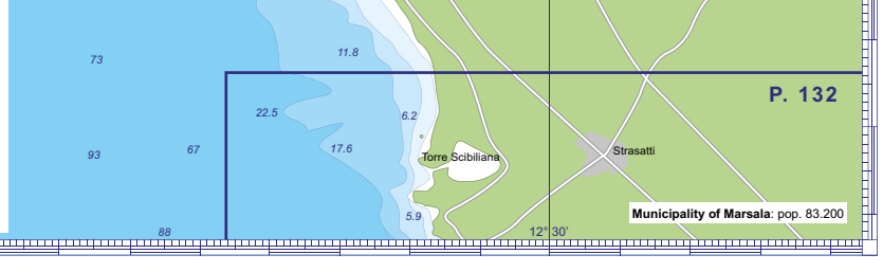
HARBOUR MASTER'S OFFICE: Circomare di Marsala - Tel. +39 0923 951 184 - VHF 16

FUEL STATION: Tel. +39 091 564 1126 - www.boat-fuelling.com

Nautica Express carries out repair and maintenance of marine engines. Authorised Volvo Penta, Mercruiser, Evinrude and Suzuki. Emmanuel +39 329 859 5080

Located in front of the port, **One Sails Sicilia Occ.** specializes in the design, production, maintenance and repair of every type of sail. It uses the best materials on the market to guarantee the best sailing experience. Nautical upholstery and fabric work. 24h assistance and delivery/pick-up service on board. Giacomo +39 328 972 1895

Curiosities, Events, Things to see, History and useful Services on page 278.



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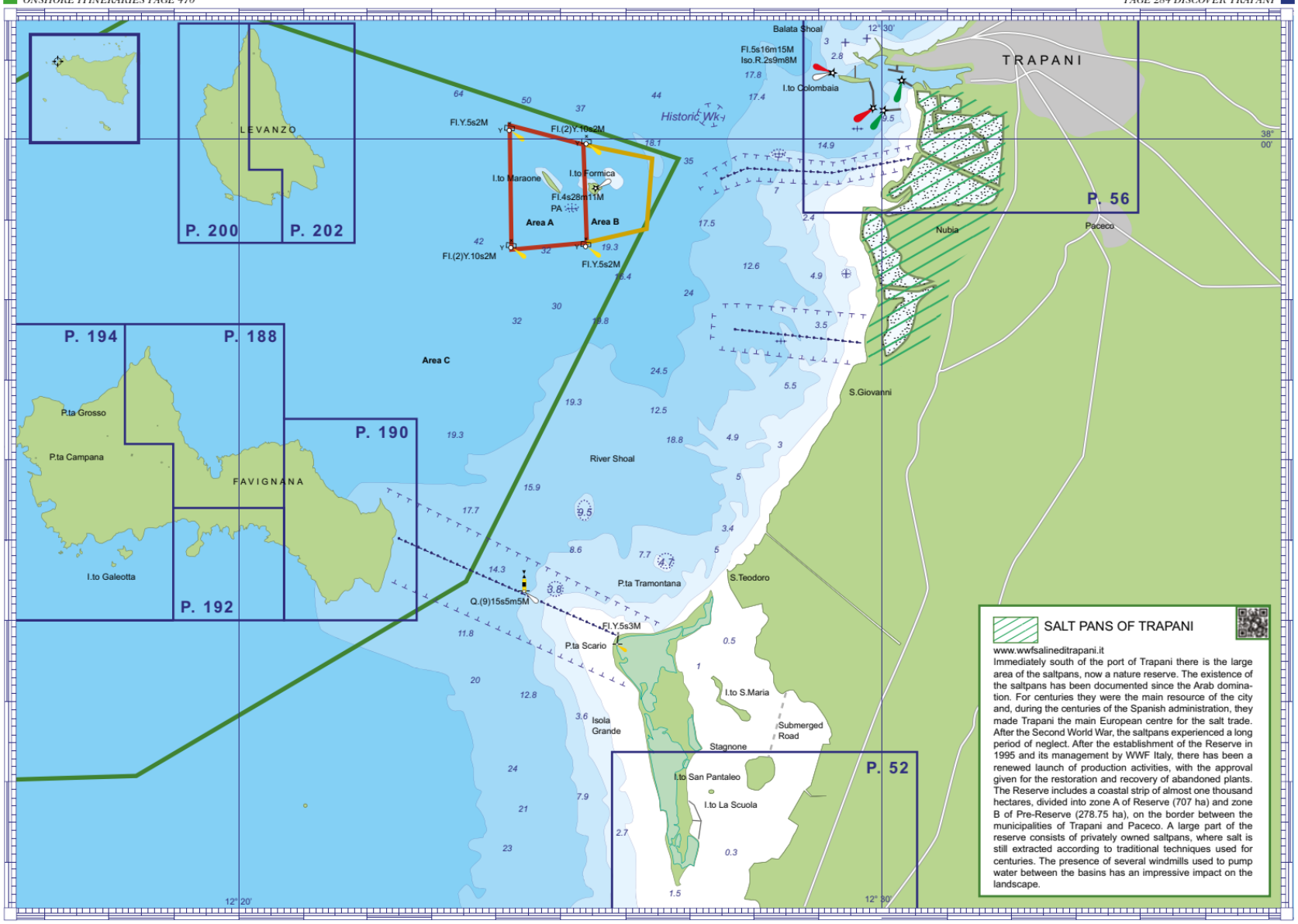
PAGE 284 DISCOVER TRAPANI



SALT PANS OF TRAPANI

www.wwfsalineditrapani.it

Immediately south of the port of Trapani there is the large area of the saltpans, now a nature reserve. The existence of the saltpans has been documented since the Arab domination. For centuries they were the main resource of the city and, during the centuries of the Spanish administration, they made Trapani the main European centre for the salt trade. After the Second World War, the saltpans experienced a long period of neglect. After the establishment of the Reserve in 1995 and its management by WWF Italy, there has been a renewed launch of production activities, with the approval given for the restoration and recovery of abandoned plants. The Reserve includes a coastal strip of almost one thousand hectares, divided into zone A of Reserve (707 ha) and zone B of Pre-Reserve (278.75 ha), on the border between the municipalities of Trapani and Paceco. A large part of the reserve consists of privately owned saltpans, where salt is still extracted according to traditional techniques used for centuries. The presence of several windmills used to pump water between the basins has an impressive impact on the landscape.

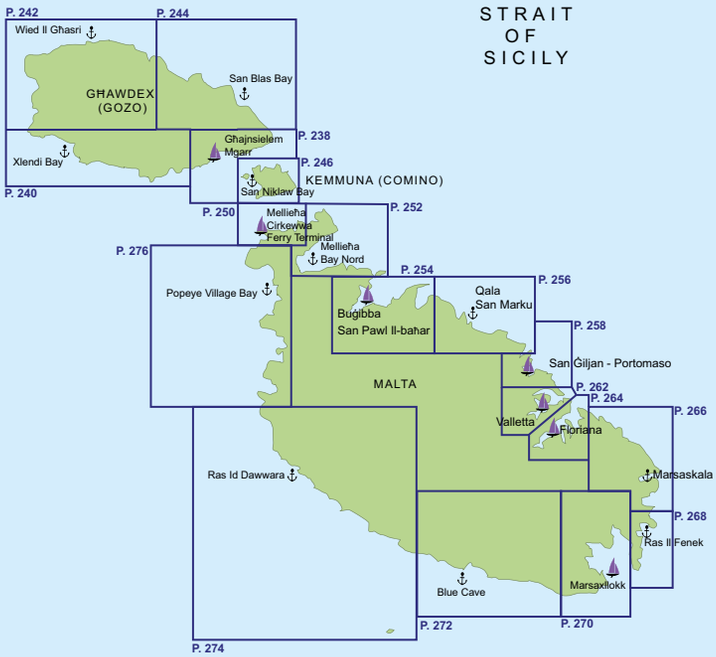
ONSHORE ITINERARIES PAGE 502

MALTA, GOZO AND COMINO

DISTANCE BETWEEN THE MAIN PORTS AND MARINAS IN NAUTICAL MILES

Ghajnsielem Mġarr - Cirkewwa	3
Cirkewwa - Buġibba San Pawl Il-baħar	7
Buġibba San Pawl Il-baħar - San Ġiljan Portomaso	7
San Ġiljan Portomaso - Valletta	3
Valletta - Floriana	2
Floriana - Marsaxlokk	11
Marsaxlokk - Cirkewwa	23

CLIMATE



The climate is Mediterranean. The regions benefitting from this characteristic weather have a hot, dry summer, mitigated by breezes in the sea areas, as in the case of Malta. This is possible thanks to the protective umbrella of the high subtropical pressures, which gain latitude towards the north in the summer period preventing the transit of the disturbances of the medium latitudes. In Malta this translates into 4 months of dry season, from the end of May to the autumn equinox, when the high pressure gradually decreases towards the south and the cyclones reach these latitudes more often, causing the first significant rainfalls. Due to the contrast between the already cooled air coming from the upper latitudes with the sea which is still very hot, rain often arrives with storm force. In winter, the rain takes on a more persistent character, but thanks to the sea cooling down, it is stormy only when the colder fronts descend. However, the cold fronts, inserted into deep troughs fed by very cold air and causing cold spells, very rarely bring the thermometer close to zero. There can be a few days with maximums below 10 °C, but it never snows and never freezes. In spring the transit of disturbances becomes less and less frequent as the season progresses, and the first subtropical warm waves are often accompanied by a warm, sandy sirocco wind. Around mid-May, the anticyclone is usually definitely established, giving rise to the long stable summer, with temperatures touching the highest peaks of heat. From June to August it is warm and sunny with maximum temperatures around 30°C, sultry but tempered by breezes.

WINDS

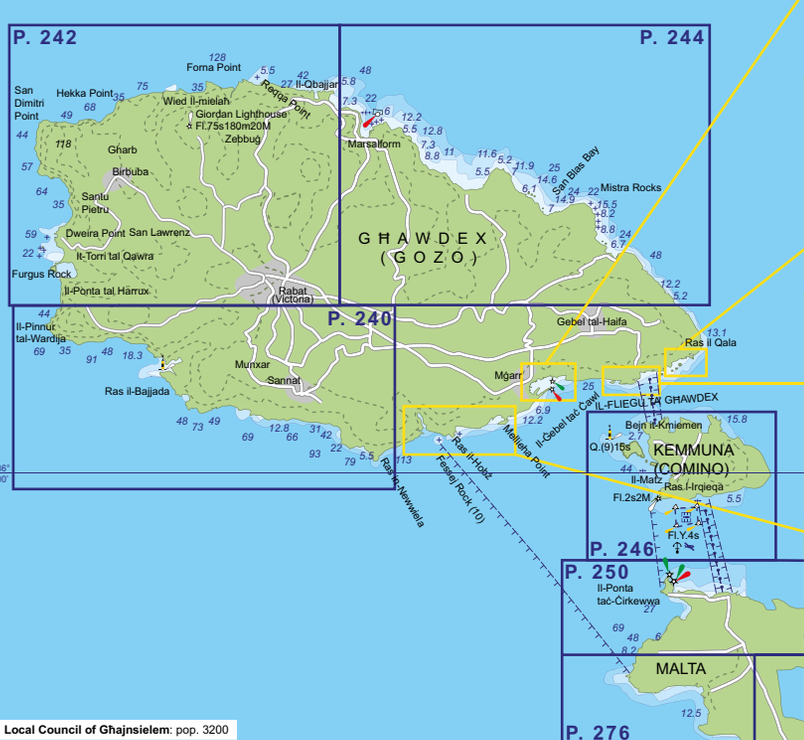
The cool and dry mistral blows from the north west, occasionally cooling down the summer a little. This wind is vital for agriculture since it brings humidity and therefore helps to maintain the water level in the soil. Sometimes the Maltese archipelago can be affected by the sirocco, the hot and dry wind blowing from the Sahara, which often carries dust or sand. In these periods, more frequent in spring and autumn, the temperature can rise several degrees. In summer the Sirocco may blow together with the African anticyclone which, collecting humidity along its way from the Sahara desert through the Mediterranean Sea, causes periods of humidity lasting several days, when the temperature can reach 37/40°C, increased by the sun.

CURRENTS

The general circulation model shows us how the coasts of the Maltese islands are lapped by a superficial current along a line that goes from north west to south east: it is one of the branches of the Atlantic current entering the Mediterranean. The influx of Atlantic water is in fact the origin of the Mediterranean surface currents that primarily follow the trends of cyclon ic type, ie anticlockwise. The waters of the Atlantic Ocean entering through the Strait of Gibraltar are colder, but with a lower saline rate and therefore tend to remain on the surface. The current is pushed southwards by the force of Coriolis, linked to the terrestrial rotation, mainly following the North African coast and it then collides with the anticyclonic current of the sea of Alborán. From here a fork is created, with a small part that flows in the direction of the Balearic Islands, while the main part continues its course and forks again in front of the western spur of Sicily. One branch laps the northern coasts of the Sicilian island, while the other branch creeps into the Strait of Sicily meeting Malta. This current first crosses an area overlooking the coasts of Tunisia and Libya, characterized by anticyclonic currents (the Gulf of Sirte), then forms what is called the "African current", which hits Malta and flows along the Levantine Sea giving rise to the current of Asia Minor, which laps the Turkish coast to Rhodes. The intensity of the current in correspondence of the Maltese archipelago is around 0.8 knots; the water temperature reaches a minimum of 16 degrees in January, up to a maximum of 26° in August. There is a current that is called Intermediate and that affects the layer of water between 200 and 600 metres and makes a movement in the opposite direction to that of the surface currents. It originates in the Levantine Sea, whose motor is correlated to the very high salinity of the water in that region; the main branch of this current runs through the entire Mediterranean and heads towards the Sicilian Channel where, due to the shallow water and the flow of the surface current, it divides into two narrow lateral passages at different altitudes. For this reason, Malta is not affected by the intermediate or deep currents, but only by the surface current.

LANDSCAPE

The total area is 316 km². The coastline of the island is interspersed with several bays and inlets that ensure excellent moorings, destination for many pleasure boats. The landscape, arid and rocky, is strongly reminiscent of south-eastern Sicily, with low hills shaped by man, terraced for crops. Much greener than Malta, the landscape of Gozo is much less developed, giving the island an air of tranquility. There are many farms and open fields and most of the island's coastline is still undeveloped; Gozo's most notable physical feature is its hills, whose prominent peaks rise and form distinct reference points visible from miles away. As in Malta, the Mediterranean landscape of Gozo is mainly made up of limestone deposits; limestone is in fact the most important building material used in Gozitan construction, dyeing the urban landscape with a rich honey colour. The coast is characterised by several bays and inlets, both sandy and rocky. The largest sandy beach on the island is Ramla il-Harma, which has ochre-coloured sand and the most remarkable collection of sand dunes on the island; dunes that house a small number of specimens of flora, among which stands out the white sea narcissus that manages to bloom under the blazing heat of the summer sun.



Local Council of Ghajnsielem: pop. 3200

GHAJNSIELEM - MGARR MARINA

N 36° 01',52 E 014°18',17

Info line +356 (0)277 801 08

www.boat-mooring.com/4079

240 berths up to 70 mt. - draught 5 mt. - VHF n.a.

The most important port of Gozo, located in a very good position, and the landing point for ferries from the Cirwekka Port of nearby Malta, just 400 metres from the village of Mgarr. It is dominated by Fort Chambray, initially intended to be the first fortified citadel. A small picturesque port in its simplicity. The piers are for pleasure crafts, while the large Central Pier is reserved for ferries.

ANCHORAGES: You can anchor in the small cove in front of the Outer Breakwater, in 5-10 metres, or in the small inlet in front of the Inner Breakwater, in 4-8 metres, both exposed from levante to libeccio.

WARNINGS: Pay attention to the heavy traffic of ferries to and from Malta. The port is exposed to winds from levante to ostro, which create undertow. It is not possible to approach the Central Pier, for the exclusive use of ferries and tourist motorboats.

HARBOUR MASTER'S OFFICE:
See Floriana - Old Town - Small Port

FUEL STATIONS: Tel. +356 (0)277 801 08
www.boat-fuelling.com

Curiosities, Events, Things to see, History and useful Services on page 452.

GEBEL TAL-HAIFA

N 36°01',77 E 014°19',98

Wonderful location, with small isolated coves that can be reached by tender. The best anchorage is to the east of the islet, in 7-10 metres, on sandy and rocky bottom, with fair holding. Exposed from levante to libeccio, beware of the semi-submerged rocks scattered in the bay; we recommend using an anchor buoy and lines ashore.

HONDOQ

N 36°01',59 E 014°19',36

Very pleasant bays, good for a swim. Hondoq gets rather crowded, but the landscape is very beautiful in spite of the many boats anchoring near the shore. Anchor east of the promontory, in 6-12 metres, or in the cove to the west of the same promontory, in 5-10 metres. Both anchorages are exposed to winds from levante to libeccio and have a bottom of sand and rocks, with good holding. We recommend using an anchor buoy to retrieve the anchor.

MGARR IX-XINI

N 36°00',98 E 014°16',48

This inlet has good depth and high rock walls that surround it and make a shelter from the winds; navigation is possible all the way up. Anchor in 2-4 metres with a line ashore, on sandy bottom, with good holding. The anchorage is exposed to sirocco and ostro. Avoid entering with the sirocco, which channels between the slopes and can hinder the stop and make the exit dangerous.

For shipyards and technical assistance visit the website boat-experts.com

XLENDI BAY

N 36°01',72 E 014°12',83

The small village that stands around, this picturesque cove was once only constituted a few fishermen's houses. Today, the high palaces of the urban centre dominate the area. Next to the public pier, there is a beautiful sea cave that can be visited. While entering the bay, pay attention to the shoal in the middle of the entrance, marked by a south cardinal buoy. The pier, mainly used by small local boats, allows an approach for tender operations. Anchor in 10-15 metres, on sand and algae bottom, with fair holding, well clear of the entrance. The bay is scattered with private mooring buoys. Exposed to winds from libeccio to mistral. Inside, strong libeccio creates undertow.

SEGUNA CLIFFS

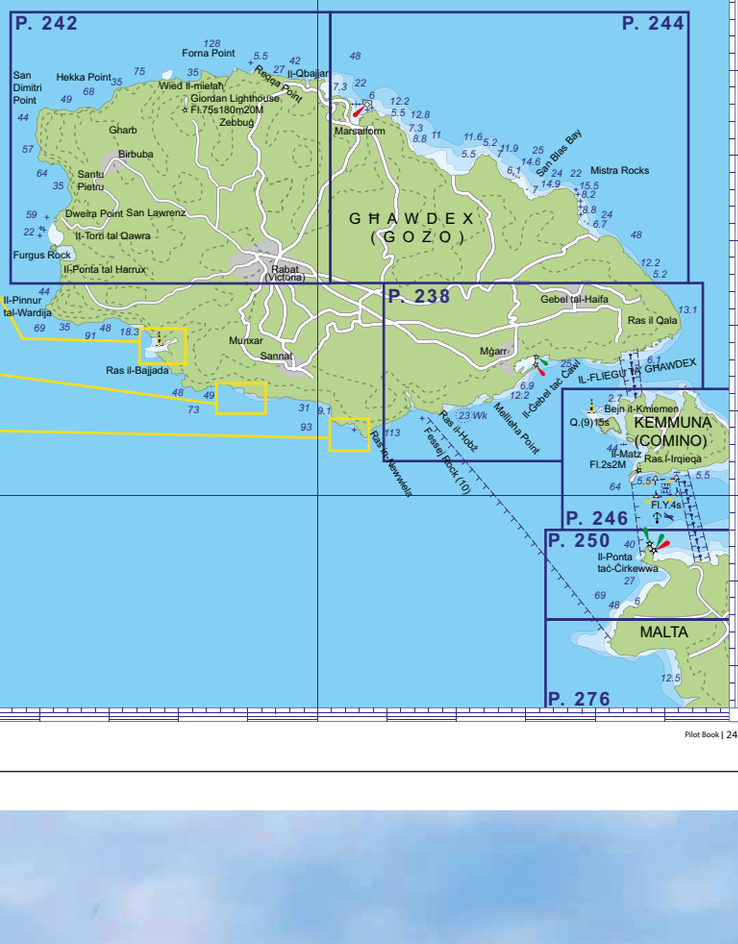
N 36°01',17 E 014°13',96

These are the least deep and at the same time most exposed anchorages in the island of Gozo, characterised by very high cliffs of white stratified sedimentary rock. Anchor in 6-8 metres, on a rocky seabed, with fair holding. We recommend using an anchor buoy. Convenient for a stay in settled weather and calm sea. Exposed from sirocco to ponente.

RAS IN-NEWWIELA

N 36°00',76 E 014°15',50

Anchorage shadowed by the snow white cliffs, typical of these areas. Excellent for a swim in calm sea and good weather, you can anchor in 5-10 metres on a rocky seabed, with fair holding. The use of an anchor buoy is therefore recommended. Exposed from sirocco to ponente.



For shipyards and technical assistance visit the website **boat-experts.com**

STRAIT OF SICILY

Cefalù

Cefalù takes its name from the Greek word "*kephale*" – head. It is a head that is at the same time a fascinating and elusive character while also winking at life. It conveys the cool gaze that we find in the eyes of the "*Unknown Sailor*", immortalised by Antonello da Messina and preserved in the brilliant cultural pot-pourri that is the Mandralisca local museum. It creates a complicity that must be savoured step by step, conquered and defended. It has an awareness stemming from an appreciation of contrasts: rich in sandy shores, niche venues, restaurants and hotels ad infinitum, Cefalù invites us to take a first look from a distance and then move closer with confidence. Our gaze then descends from the summit of the castle to the inhabited hamlet, where the winding alleyways suddenly open onto unexpected gleams of light, and the sweet shimmer of the foaming sea. It is not a case if among the places that tourists like the most there is the robust and at the same time dreamy geometry of Porta Marina, the opening in the surrounding walls that offers a direct view of the Tyrrhenian Sea. But Cefalù also bears the richness of the landscapes and geological contrasts of the Madonie mountain range, able to pass abruptly from sweet rolling hills to sudden harshness, where rivers such as the Pollina and the Imera dig sharp grooves and create immense green valleys and clay uplands. This taste for the superimposition of difference also characterises the cuisine, displaying elaborate dishes such as the pasta a *taianu* (penne prepared in a terracotta container alternated with layers of beef and lamb, basil, aubergine and pecorino cheese) and the *carne murata* (also layered with meat, onions and potatoes). For centuries Cefalù has defined itself as a city-laboratory, where everything transforms in an immaterial, superior light, where the light itself can turn into tangible reality.

Stefano Aicardi

Cefalù Harbour

ON BOARD

SUPERMARKET

Close to the seafront, **Food Sicily Market** offers an interesting selection of typical Sicilian products. High quality charcuterie, cheese, wine from the area, oil, preserves, certified organic products and many others for everyday use. Supporters of the "Slow Food" and "Addio pizzo" philosophy. Guaranteed galley, on board delivery. Simone +39 0921 921 819

HARBOUR

Just below the fortress to the east of the town of Cefalù, in the district of Presidiana and near the imposing lighthouse flashing white from Capo Cefalù, lies the port of Cefalù. A natural promontory known as the Calura, which, with its medieval tower from the 16th century, closes the stretch of water in the port to the east. The port is protected by a three-branched breakwater with an internal reinforced concrete jetty: it is shared by a modest fleet of local fishing and pleasure boats.

The moorings are about a 15 minute walk from the village, but you can also reach it with a walk along the cliff and it is definitely worth a visit, to immerse yourself in the history and traditions of this part of Sicily. Walking through the streets that go up from the promenade and reaching the old town, considered one of the most beautiful in Italy, you can see how this village has preserved its medieval appearance over the centuries. The palaces that enrich the city and the characteristic seaside village with its ancient houses facing the sea are just some of the elements that make Cefalù a fascinating centre to be discovered.

CURIOSITIES

Cefalù is linked to several water-related legends in different ways. The most notable is that of the dome, which according to myth was raised as an act of gratitude by King Roger II, who miraculously escaped a shipwreck on August 6th 1130. Also well-known in the city is the myth of Daphnis, a shepherd of great beauty and captivating voice. The nymph Echenais, Juno's daughter, fell in love with him and married him, swearing him to fidelity. But a nearby king, Zeno, invited Daphnis to his palace to entertain the court with his singing. Zeno's wife, Climene, took a fancy to Daphnis, got him drunk and seduced him. In consequence, Juno punished Daphnis by blinding him and turning him into a stone. The public Medieval Washhouse, located not far from Martino Palace and fed by the river Cefalino, has a related legend: a caption at the entrance describes the cold and crystalline water of the river, generated from the tears of a nymph who regretted killing the lover who had betrayed her.

Cathedral of the Transfiguration

EVENTS

The *Festa del Santissimo Salvatore della Trasfigurazione* ("Feast of the Most Holy Saviour of the Transfiguration") is held in Cefalù from August 2nd to 6th. The origins of the festival are at the intersection of history and liturgy: on a spiritual level, Roger II of Altavilla was linked with the story of Christ's Transfiguration. This link is recalled at the opening ceremony, on August 2nd, with the placing of the Flag of Christ Pantocrator between the towers of the Cathedral, and in the final procession on August 6th. Among the events of the festival, the "*Antinna a mari*" is a competition held on the final day, where the fishermen have to grab a flag, slippery with soap, flown from a pole on the quay.

THINGS to SEE

Cefalù is primarily renowned as a large seaside resort. Its beaches display a wide variety of features, and are therefore suitable for all tastes and needs. From the sandy shores of the **Lido** (1,5 km long), and **Salinelle**, ideal for families and children, to the pebbly and rocky beach of **Mazzaforno** (ideal for snorkelling), **Caldura** and **S. Ambrogio**, across **Capo Playa**, a wind-swept beach ideal for surf lovers. From the shore, we can see that the town of Cefalù rises from the foot of a 268 m high cliff, at whose peak we find the ruins of the local **castle**. The only gateway still standing in the surrounding walls, **Porta Marina**, faces the sea, with impressive views. On the west side of the fortress stands the **Temple of Diana**, one of the few remaining testimonies of the pre-Hellenistic settlements. Among religious buildings, without doubt the most important is the **Cathedral of the Transfiguration**, World Heritage since 2015. Among the splendours of the cathedral, we find the parvis (that used to be a cemetery), the pyramidal pinnacles added to the two Norman towers in the c. 15th, the Arab-style decorations of the wooden ceiling of the three naves, the Byzantine mosaics of the presbytery (with a magnificent Christ Pantocrator on a golden background, on the apse) and the decorated capitals of the double columns of the cloister. Another important church is the 15th c. **Church of the Purgatory or of St. Stephen Protomartyr**, whose entrance is through a double ramp stairway. The church is so called because in the c. 17th it was run by the Confraternity of the Purgant Souls (the theme of the catharsis is reiterated in the internal decoration). The **Sanctuary of Gibilmanna**, with its annexed capuchin convent, is located in the homonymous village and set 800 m above sea level on the western side of Mount S.Angelo. It contains the statue of the Virgin with child that according to the tradition was brought here after an apparition of the Virgin to a capuchin friar in 1534.

As for civil architecture, the **Medieval Washhouse** is worth mentioning (with its architectural mingling of Arab style in the use of ogee arches) as well as the ***Osterio Magno***: erected in the 13th c. by the Ventimiglia del Maro family, it was for a long time considered the favourite abode of Roger II of Altavilla and it is remarkable for the majesty of the tall, square tower of three floors and for the *trifora* (mullioned window with 3 units) with Sicilian-style arch. The only museum in Cefalù, the **Mandralisca Museum**, displays the eclectic collection of the baron Enrico Pirajno di Mandralisca (1809-1864). Amongst devotional paintings, Venetian-style landscapes, neoclassical furniture, archaeological, malacological and ornithological records, the enigmatic "*Portrait of Unknown Sailor*" by Antonello da Messina stands out (painted between 1465 and 1472). Cefalù is part of the **Madonie Regional Natural Park**, opened in 1989 and extended over almost 40,000 ha of land, where you may enjoy excursions among many examples of the endemic flora and fauna of Sicily.

HISTORY

The first traces of human presence in the territory of Cefalù lead you to the town's headland and thence to the Temple of Diana, a structure of monolithic blocks perhaps dating back to the c. 5th BC. It is assumed that the Phoenicians settled there until the arrival of the Greeks, in the c. 4th BC. Despite an alliance with the Carthaginians in force since 396 BC, the town (now known by the name "*Kefaloidion*" for the head-shape of its headland) was conquered by the Syracusans of Agathocles in 307 BC and in 254 BC by the Romans, under whom it did not see any significant economic growth. In the meantime the name of the city was Latinized into "*Cephaloedium*". The Barbaric invasions forced most of the population to retreat to the town's headland, including the Temple of Diana, which in fact displays examples of Byzantine architecture beside the original structures. After being a Byzantine outpost, the city passed to the Saracens in 858 and became part of the Emirate of Palermo with the name of Gafludi. In 1063 it was conquered by Roger I d'Altavilla. Most of the monuments in town are attributed to the Normans, starting with the Cathedral (begun in 1131 and finished in 1240), as is its impressive economic growth. After the Normans, a long period of instability started, in which Cefalù was a disputed town among the various feudal lords and bishops and involved in the struggles between Aragonese, Angevins and papacy for the supremacy over Sicily. The second and last golden period of the pre-modern history of Cefalù goes from 1451 to 1533. In 1451 the local bishop Luca Sarzana ransomed the city at his own expense and asked Alfonso of Aragon to impose a ban on the transfer and purchase of the city. Until the c. 19th the history of Cefalù didn't display any remarkable change, whereas the city joined with conviction the movements of Italian unification. Among the martyrs of the *Risorgimento*, Salvatore Spinuzza is revered. He was shot on March 14th 1857 after a decade of anti-Bourbon struggles and a monument has been dedicated to his memory. In spite of the damage suffered during the bombings of WW2, Cefalù is today a tourist centre of great importance, rich in services and culture. In 2015 its Cathedral has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, as part of the "Arab-Norman Palermo and the Cathedrals of Cefalù and Monreale" group.

HOW TO GET AROUND

INCOMING TOUR OPERATOR

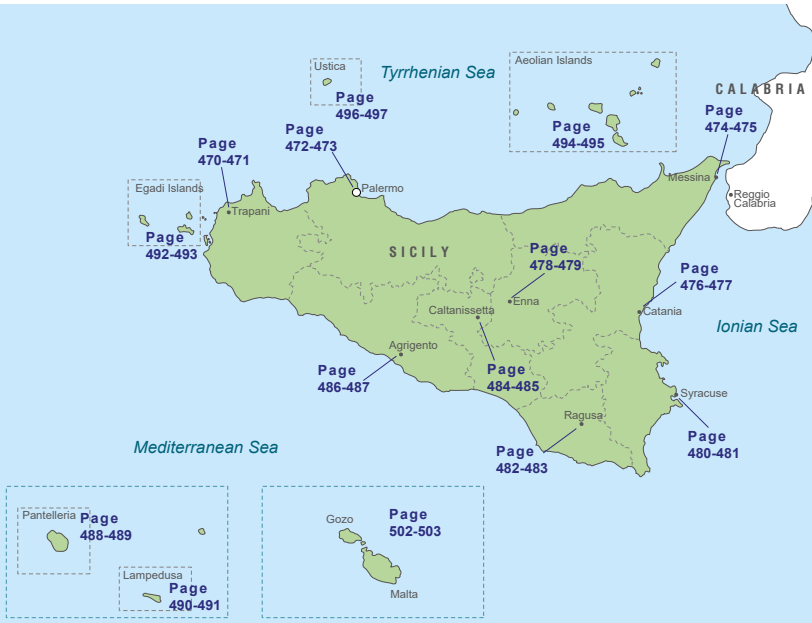
GLOBAT VIAGGI

If you wish to discover the beauties of Sicily, go to **Globat Viaggi**, travel agency organising local tours and itineraries. A trip to Pollina, a fascinating hamlet on the mountain, is recommended, as well as the impressive archaeological sites of Agrigento and Segesta. The staff can help with transfer and accommodation. Silvana +39 0921 922 842

Cefalù

Alluminium Can. 200 years.

SAVE



ONSHORE ITINERARIES

Sailors are explorers and by nature curious and adventurous, and they long to see the world from different

We divided the territory in different zones and provided suggestions about: old villages and castles, archaeological sites and museums, nature and sport, food and wine, curiosities and traditional events for each province over-

the SEA

777
IL PORTOLANO
PILOT BOOK

perspectives. Besides their love of the sea and its secrets, sailors also enjoy exploring the places where they stop.

Ports are not just somewhere to find shelter, water and electricity, **but can be the starting point for visits inland**. With this in mind, **we have gathered the information in the following pages to help you explore the hinterland and to recommend the attractions that we enjoyed most**.
From extensive on-site research and with advice from locals, we have selected the places, museums, archaeological sites, villages, parks, festivities and events that we believe best reflect the real essence of the island.

Where appropriate, we have also picked a few trustworthy professionals, connoisseurs of the territory, **who can introduce you to some of the treasures of the island and meet your needs and requests**. Besides providing useful information about locations and how to get to them, they can usually arrange transport, with a private driver if needed. You can also request a tour guide to organize and accompany you on your trips.

looking the sea.

To this end, we have divided the island into four areas: on each page we have marked all the Visitor Friendly ports with a yellow boat, i.e. those ports with visitor berths. In the top-right corner of each page we have added useful contacts for exploring inland.

In order to make our Pilot Book easier to use while following your route on the chart, find the page number with the corresponding itinerary at the upper left corner of the page.

Key to symbols

Useful contacts for exploring inland from the main ports

VISITOR FRIENDLY
Moorings available for transit

Old Villages & Castles
Archaeological Sites & Museums
Points of interest & Places of worship
Nature & Sport
Food & Wine
Curiosities & Traditional Events

Cathedral of Palermo

1) MOUNT ETNA, THE BIGGEST ACTIVE VOLCANO IN EUROPE

Mount Etna offers a great variety of landscapes and colours: the most evident contrast is constituted by the **black lava** and the green **Mediterranean scrub**. In addition, in winter, the snow paints the **summit white** on which it is possible to ski. The continuous activity and frequent eruptions make for **lava flows of a vibrant red colour**. These eruptions derive from the four summit craters, whereas the more sporadic eruptions are produced in the crevices of old craters located along the slopes. The volcano rises on the eastern coast of Sicily, not far from the Straits of Messina.

2) DISCOVERING THE SICILIAN BAROQUE

The Sicilian baroque is characterised by the immense richness of its decoration. The earthquake that shook the island in 1693 contributed to the growth of this new style whose peculiarity is the **combination of Sicilian and Spanish elements**. Unique for its majesty, this style was embraced for the reconstruction of the palaces and later for sacred buildings, churches and cathedrals, some of which were built on the ruins of ancient temples. **Noto** was the town most severely damaged and the massive reconstruction determined its definition as the **Baroque capital, included among Unesco heritage sites**. The island, especially in its southern part, offers many examples of Baroque buildings among which the Duomo of Syracuse, the *Cattedrale di Sant'Agata* in Catania and the *Basilica di San Sebastiano* in Acireale.

3) AN HISTORIC WALK IN THE VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES

The Valley of the Temples has been declared a Unesco World Heritage site. In the complex of **Doric temples and monuments from the Greek era**, the Temple of Concordia was a point of reference for sailors and is today in excellent condition and state of preservation. The site is divided into two areas of historic interest: the eastern and the western; the most famous temples are located in the first.

4) SALT PILES AND WIND MILLS

An evocative landscape, protected by the **Riserva Naturale Saline di Trapani e Paceco**. Extending to an area of c.1000 ha, it is the ideal habitat for many birds including the elegant pink flamingo. Multiple nuances colour the landscape: the blue of the pools from which the water evaporates in the sun, the red of the intermediate pools due to the colouring of a particular algae, and lastly, the white of the smaller pools where the salt crystalizes. This activity of extraction dates to ancient times and the salt produced here is considered a Slow Food presidium.

Valley of the Temples, Agrigento

5) THEATRE OF TAORMINA, BETWEEN HISTORY AND MODERNITY

Excavated into the rock, the Theatre of Taormina is located in a panoramic vantage point from whence you can admire Mount Etna and a glimpse of the Ionian Sea. Begun by the Greeks and then reconstructed by the Romans, through the years it has changed the use it was designed for: initially used for musical and dramatic performances, later to become an arena for gladiatorial combat. It now houses **international cultural and artistic events** in its prestigious setting. The Theatre of Taormina is the second biggest classic theatre of Sicily, after that of Syracuse, and the most ancient and best preserved monument in Taormina.

6) SCALA DEI TURCHI ("STAIR OF THE TURKS")

This cliff overlooking the sea is reminiscent of a staircase. It rises along the southern coast of the province of Agrigento. It is a limestone and clayish rock, a sort of natural solarium where to sit and sunbathe. **Camilleri's novels speak of it and the tv-series *Montalbano*** has brought fame to the area. In the past, the incursions of the Turkish pirates used to land in this area, giving it its name of *"La Scala dei Turchi"*.

7) THE COLOURFUL AND SCENTED SICILIAN MARKETS

Fruit, vegetables and fish abound in typical Sicilian markets, which stem from **ancient traditions**. Among the most famous, the Pescheria, a picturesque fish market in Catania; the fair in Carlo Alberto square, whose stands sell food and clothing; in Palermo, the three historic markets of Ballarò, del Capo and della Vucciria; and the ancient market adjacent to the port of Syracuse, which offers fish and fresh produce. Every last Sunday of the month, the flea market of Modica offers vintage goods.

8) RAGUSA IBLA

When you take a walk through the streets you will be enthralled by the many churches and historic palaces, including the Arezzi Palace, in the **ancient historic centre of Ragusa**, included in the list of Unesco World Heritage sites. Piazza di Vigata and the Duomo di San Giorgio, with its impressive staircase, are just some of the places that the tv-series *Il Commissario Montalbano* made famous. Not far away are the Ibleo Gardens, created in 1858.

9) SICILY, LAND OF PARKS AND NATURE RESERVES

In the island there are numerous parks, and several protected areas have been established in order to **safeguard the great natural heritage**. Among these: the *Riserva Naturale di Vendicari*, the *Riserva dello Zingaro*, the *Parco delle Madonie*, the *Riserva di Cavagrande del Cassabile*, the *Parco Fluviale dell'Alcantara*, the *Riserva Torre Salsa* and many more.

10) THE PROCESSIONS OF THE HOLY WEEK

The Holy Week is punctuated by a rich calendar of religious events. In Trapani, the heartfelt ***Processione dei Misteri*** takes place, where the different corporations of the city carry their Sacred Groups along the illuminated streets decorated with flowers. In Caltanissetta one of the most evocative events takes place: several processions occur during Holy Week and retrace the Christ's Passion until his Resurrection ah Easter Sunday.

Ancient Greek Theatre, Taormina

A BITE AND A SIP IN SICILY

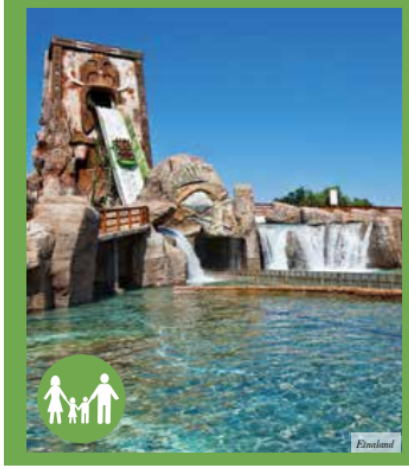
Do not leave Sicily without tasting the ice-cream, strictly homemade, consumed as a refreshing snack and a welcome relief during particularly hot days. In the island you can also eat ice-cream in the morning, inside a soft and still warm brioche. The latter is often served with the ***granita***, and frequently covered with whipped cream. **The most popular flavours, not forgetting those derived from typical local Sicilian products, are coffee, almond, lemon and mulberries.** The origins of the *granita* date back to the Arab domination, when the sorbet was introduced on the island. The mix of frozen water and syrup has then transformed in two different ways: *granita* and *cremolata*, the latter characterized by the presence of milk instead of water, which then gave birth to ice cream.

A typical Sicilian pastry dessert, the cannoli, were prepared for the Carnival period. Today we find them all year long and on every occasion. Created with a fried crunchy wafer, they are stuffed with sheep ricotta to which chocolate chips are added. Often served garnished with candied fruits, usually cherry or orange peel.

The Cannoli

Path of Mount Etna, Catania

Contrasting colours characterise Sicily, a land of infinite shades. Stroll through the baroque architecture and the numerous temples to appreciate the testimonies of the different cultures that have inhabited the island. Take a dip in the crystalline, turquoise sea to discover archipelagos and islands. The island's gastronomy offers delectable products and typical dishes to delight the palate. Tradition and parties make the island engaging and dynamic.



Etnaland

FAMILY FUN: ACTIVITIES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

For a day of relaxation and full of family fun, here are our suggestions:

ETNALAND: have an exciting experience at the foot of the volcano. A Themepark with mechanical attractions and an Acquapark made for the summer fun; a Prehistoric Park also exists, with annexed botanic garden, for a more educational experience.

ADVENTURE PARK MADONIE: find eco-friendly activities in the heart of the Park of the Madonie. The park offers naturalistic excursions and educational workshops, acrobatic paths among the trees, orienteering, mountain bike trails and trekking.

KONTILAND: this is a thematic park in which the symbolic monuments of the region are recreated in miniature. They are made using the same materials as the original and they enable a mini, scaled-down tour of the various Sicilian towns.