



3 PERFECT DAYS

♥ DAY 1 // EXPLORING LIPARI & VULCANO

Get off to a good start with a pastry and cappuccino at Pasticceria Subba (p138), before heading up to Lipari Town's citadel (p135) to explore the Museo Archeologico Eoliano (p136) and its extensive archaeological collection. Afterwards, grab a quick bite to eat and head down to Marina Corta for a boat tour (p138) of the island and neighbouring Vulcano (p143). Remember your swimsuit as you'll have the chance to swim and wallow in Vulcano's famous mud baths (p144). End the day with dinner back in Lipari Town.

♥ DAY 2 // STROMBOLI'S FIERY VOLCANO

Catch a hydrofoil to Stromboli (p153) at the far north of the archipelago. Spend the morning relaxing on the black sandy beaches (p157) and strolling the tiny white-washed streets. Lunch on seafood in preparation for the day's main event – the sunset trek up the volcano (p155). It's a five- to six-hour hike but you'll be rewarded (hopefully) with a spectacular fireworks display over the Sciara del Fuoco (p156).

♥ DAY 3 // LAID-BACK SALINA

Enjoy a day of relative tranquillity on Salina (p147), the second largest and most verdant of the islands. Have a quick look around Santa Marina Salina (p148), then pick up some wheels and head off to Malfa (p149) to taste the local Malvasia wine. Nearby, the beach at Pollara (p149) is famous for its role in the film *Il Postino*. Spend the evening in Lingua (p148), delighting over the *granite* (crushed-ice drinks) and delicious seafood.

TRANSPORT

AIR // The only way to get to the Aeolian Islands by air is to take a helicopter. Between June and September **Air Panarea** (☎ 090 983 44 28; www.airpanarea.com) operates transfers from Reggio di Calabria airport to Lipari, Vulcano, Salina and Panarea (all €200); Filicudi (€240); Stromboli and Alicudi (both €300).

BOAT // The main point of departure for the Aeolians is Milazzo (p125), from where there are regular year-round car ferries and hydrofoils. There are also year-round services from Messina, Reggio di Calabria and Naples, and summer-only services from Cefalù and Palermo. Services are most frequent between June and September and much reduced in winter, when heavy seas can affect schedules. Ferries are cheaper, less frequent and much slower than hydrofoils, although they are less vulnerable to bad weather. The main operating companies are **Ustica Lines** (☎ 0923 87 38 13; www.usticalines.it), which operates hydrofoils only; **Siremar** (☎ 892123; www.siremar.it), which has hydrofoils and ferries; and **NGI** (☎ 800 250000; www.ngi-spa.it), which runs ferries only. Note that the information listed below refers to high-season crossings and is not comprehensive – check the respective company websites for more detailed information. From Milazzo, there are hydrofoils to Vulcano (€14.90, 45 minutes, 17 daily), Lipari (€15.80, one hour, 18 daily), Salina (€17.25, 1½ to two hours, 12 daily), Panarea (€17.80, 2¼ hours, eight daily), Stromboli (€21.45, three hours, eight daily), Filicudi (€22.75, 2½ hours, three daily) and Alicudi (€22.75, 3¼ hours, three daily). Get tickets from the sales offices on Via dei Mille. Year-round Ustica Lines hydrofoils also serve Lipari from Messina (€22.90, 1½ to 3¼ hours, five daily summer, one daily winter) and Reggio di Calabria (€23.90, two to three hours, four daily summer, one daily winter), with summer-only services from Cefalù (€29.90, 3½ hours, one daily) and Palermo (€38.70, four hours, two daily). Siremar runs ferries from Naples to Lipari (€59, 13½ hours, twice weekly) and the other islands. Lipari is the Aeolians' main transport hub, with connections to all the other islands – see p142 for further details.

BUS // Between April and September **Giuntabus** (☎ 090 67 37 82; www.giuntabustrasporti.com) runs a daily shuttle bus between Catania airport and Milazzo, leaving Milazzo at 8.45am and Catania at 5pm. The

journey takes one hour and 50 minutes and tickets, available on the bus, cost €12. You can also book tickets for a private shuttle bus (€25 per person, minimum two people, up to five departures daily) covering the same route on www.eoliebooking.com.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE // If you are only visiting the islands for a couple of days, it'll probably be too expensive to take your own car – leave it in a garage in Milazzo (from €12 per day – see p127) – but for longer trips, it works out cheaper than hiring one. You can take cars onto Lipari, Vulcano and Salina, all of which also have scooter- and car-rental outlets. Note, however, that restrictions apply and between July and September you can only take a car if you have booked accommodation for at least seven days.

LIPARI

pop 11,240

Lipari is the largest, busiest and most accessible of the Aeolian Islands. The main focus is Lipari Town, the archipelago's principal transport hub and the nearest thing that islanders have to a capital city. A busy little port with a pretty, pastel-coloured seafront and plenty of accommodation, it makes the best base for island hopping. Away from the town, Lipari reveals a rugged and typically Mediterranean landscape of low-lying *macchia* (dense shrubland), silent, windswept highlands, precipitous cliffs and dreamy blue waters.

Named after Liparus, the father-in-law of Aeolus (the Greek god of the winds), Lipari was settled in the 4th millennium BC by the Stentillenians, Sicily's first known inhabitants. These early islanders developed a flourishing economy based on obsidian, a glassy volcanic rock used to make primitive tools. Commerce continued under the Greeks, but the arrival of the Romans in the 3rd century BC signalled the end of the islanders' good

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