



Tyrrhenian Coast

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Ti Vitti (p118)
- ➔ Casale Drinzi (p125)
- ➔ Da Salvatore (p124)
- ➔ Nangalarruni (p123)
- ➔ A Castellana (p120)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Atelier sul Mare (p257)
- ➔ Green Manors Country Hotel (p258)
- ➔ B&B L'Alberghetto (p258)
- ➔ Albergo Il Castello (p257)
- ➔ Agriturismo Pardo (p257)

Why Go?

The coastal stretch between Palermo and Milazzo is packed with dramatic beach and mountain scenery, and appealing coastal towns like Cefalù and Castel di Tusa – but once summer rolls around, it's holiday central, characterised by crowded roads and beaches. Somehow neither this nor the ever-growing proliferation of ugly concrete buildings marling the coastline can dissuade locals from coming here for their annual vacation and having a whale of a time.

Few sun-worshippers head inland from these sybaritic summer playgrounds to visit the nearby Madonie and Nebrodi mountains, but those who do are swiftly seduced. These superb natural landscapes enfold hilltop villages where the lifestyle is traditional, the sense of history palpable and the mountain cuisine exceptional, featuring wild forest mushrooms, *suino nero* pork, and ricotta straight from the sheep.

Road Distances (KM)

Castelbuono	75			
Cefalù	50	20		
Milazzo	185	135	130	
Petralia Sottana	90	35	60	175
	Caccamo	Castelbuono	Cefalù	Milazzo

Getting Around

Trains are frequent and dependable along the coast, but once you head inland, your own wheels are nearly indispensable, especially for exploring the scenic backroads of the Madonie and Nebrodi mountains. Buses from coastal hubs like Palermo and Cefalù service interior towns such as Castelbuono, Collesano, Petralia and Caccamo, but they have limited schedules, and there's no public transport linking these interior towns to one another once you get there.

THREE PERFECT DAYS

Explore Beaches

Take the squiggly SS113 along the coast, or zip down the A20 autostrada, admiring the engineering wizardry of its bridges and tunnels. Either way, a few stops are mandatory. Prowl the pretty sands at **Capo d'Orlando**, brake for avant-garde art (and lunch by the waterfront) at **Castel di Tusa** and pull into **Cefalù** by mid-afternoon, in time to savour the region's prettiest town-plus-beach combo before sundown.

Travel Back in Time

Start in Cefalù with a visit to the Byzantine mosaics of its cathedral and a wander through its enchanting tangle of back streets. Next head inland to **Castelbuono**, where you can tour the 14th-century castle and enjoy superb mountain cuisine in a pair of atmospherically rustic eateries. End the afternoon at **Caccamo**, touring its imposing cliff-top Norman castle and then enjoying a meal fit for a foreign invader at A Castellana (p120) next door.

Meander Through Forgotten Mountains

Link the Madonie and Nebrodi mountains with a scenic inland jaunt through a series of little-visited hill towns. From Cefalù climb south to the mountain town of Castelbuono, then circle the dramatic Madonie mountains to Petralia Sottana. Next, head east through the gorgeous villages of Gangi, Sperlinga and Nicosia, all perched high on rocky ledges and surrounded by rolling, wildflower-draped hills. From here, it's an easy trip north to Mistretta in the Parco Regionale dei Nebrodi.

Getting Away from It All

- **Explore Mistretta** A tranquil time capsule perched on the Parco Regionale dei Nebrodi's western border.
- **Savour the silence in Petralia Soprana** The cobbled streets of this ancient mountain village are often deserted.
- **Hike the high country** Walk across carpets of spring wildflowers in Piano Battaglia after the ski bunnies have decamped for the beach.

DON'T MISS

Climbing to the top of La Rocca (p116) in Cefalù. This ancient eyrie with its ruined temple and castle commands spectacular views of the medieval town centre, the Tyrrhenian Sea, and the surrounding beaches.

Best Hill Towns

- Petralia Sottana (p124)
- San Marco d'Alunzio (p126)
- Mistretta (p127)
- Castelbuono (p121)

Best Panoramic Viewpoints

- Castello di Caccamo (p120)
- La Rocca (p116)
- Ancient ruins, Tyndaris (p128)
- Belvedere, Petralia Soprana (p124)
- Belvedere, Santuario di Gibilmanna (p122)

Resources

- **Parks.it** (www.parks.it) English-language info on the Madonie and Nebrodi parks.
- **Parco dei Nebrodi** (www.parcodelnebrodi.it) Official site.
- **Parco delle Madonie** (www.parcodellemadonie.it) Official site.
- **Cefalù-sicily.it** (www.cefalu-sicily.it) A map of Cefalù and other info.
- **Milazzo Info** (www.milazzo.info) Info about Milazzo.