



Ionian Coast

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Mount Etna	181

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Il Barcaiolo (p164)
- ➔ Osteria Nero D'Avola (p164)
- ➔ Mè Cumpari Turiddu (p174)
- ➔ Pescheria Fratelli Vittorio (p174)
- ➔ Shalai (p256)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ B&B Crociferi (p255)
- ➔ B&B Habitat (p255)
- ➔ Hotel Villa Belvedere (p254)
- ➔ Casa Turchetti (p254)
- ➔ Shalai (p256)

Why Go?

The Ionian Coast is studded with enough Sicilian icons to fill a souvenir tea towel. It's here that you'll find the skinny Strait of Messina, mighty Mt Etna and the world's most spectacularly located ancient Greek theatre. Catania is the region's centre, a shabby, swinging city packed with students, bars and nightlife. Its black-and-white baroque is World Heritage-listed, while its hyperactive fish market is one of Sicily's most appetising sights. Halfway up a rocky mountainside, regal Taormina is sophisticated and exclusive, a favourite of holidaying VIPs and day-tripping tourists. Brooding menacingly on the city's doorstep, Mt Etna offers unforgettable hiking, both to the summit craters and around the woods that carpet its lower slopes. Etna is also a wine area, dotted with vines and celebrated wineries. With a car and a little planning, the mountain sets a stunning scene for hunting out the perfect vintage.

Road Distances (km)

Catania	15			
Messina	85	95		
Nicolosi	20	15	100	
Taormina	40	50	50	60
	Acireale	Catania	Messina	Nicolosi

Ionian Coast Highlights

1 Mt Etna

(p181) Hiking up Europe's tallest active volcano for surreal moonscapes, views of mainland Italy and a deep, rare silence.

2 Catania (p168)

Exploring the city's raucous seafood market, World Heritage baroque architecture and thumping bars.

3 Teatro Greco

(p161) Applauding dramatic panoramas and summertime opera at Taormina's ancient Greek theatre.

4 Isola

Bella (p164)

Summertime splashing, snorkelling and diving in the turquoise waters off this tiny island, just below Taormina.

