



Palermo

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Best Places to Eat

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- ➔ Trattoria al Vecchio Club Rosanero (p64)
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- ➔ Il Maestro del Brodo (p66)
- ➔ Trattoria Ai Cascinari (p64)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ BB22 Palace (p246)
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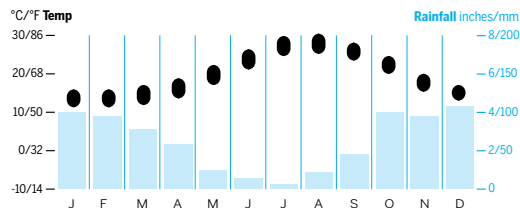
Why Go?

Flamboyant, guarded, feisty yet staunchly aristocratic, Palermo is a seething mass of contradictions. Pock-marked buildings, broken pavements and decrepit infrastructure reveal deep political and economic cracks, and yet all are easy to overlook when you enter a church full of luminously beautiful Byzantine mosaics, wander along a street of stately baroque *palazzi* (palaces) or eavesdrop on the genial banter between canny stall owners and bargain-hunting housewives at a street market. Palermo is a cryptic creature, a city where nefarious neglect and soul-stirring beauty have always linked arms, where preconceptions are concurrently affirmed and subverted, where light and shade stir impressions that bury deep under your skin.

Beyond Palermo is a string of worthy day-trip destinations. Among these is the mosaicked magnificence of Monreale Cathedral, beach-loving Mondello, the pristine marine reserve of Ustica island, and the inland town of Corleone, home to a defiant anti-mafia museum.

When to Go

Palermo



Apr & May

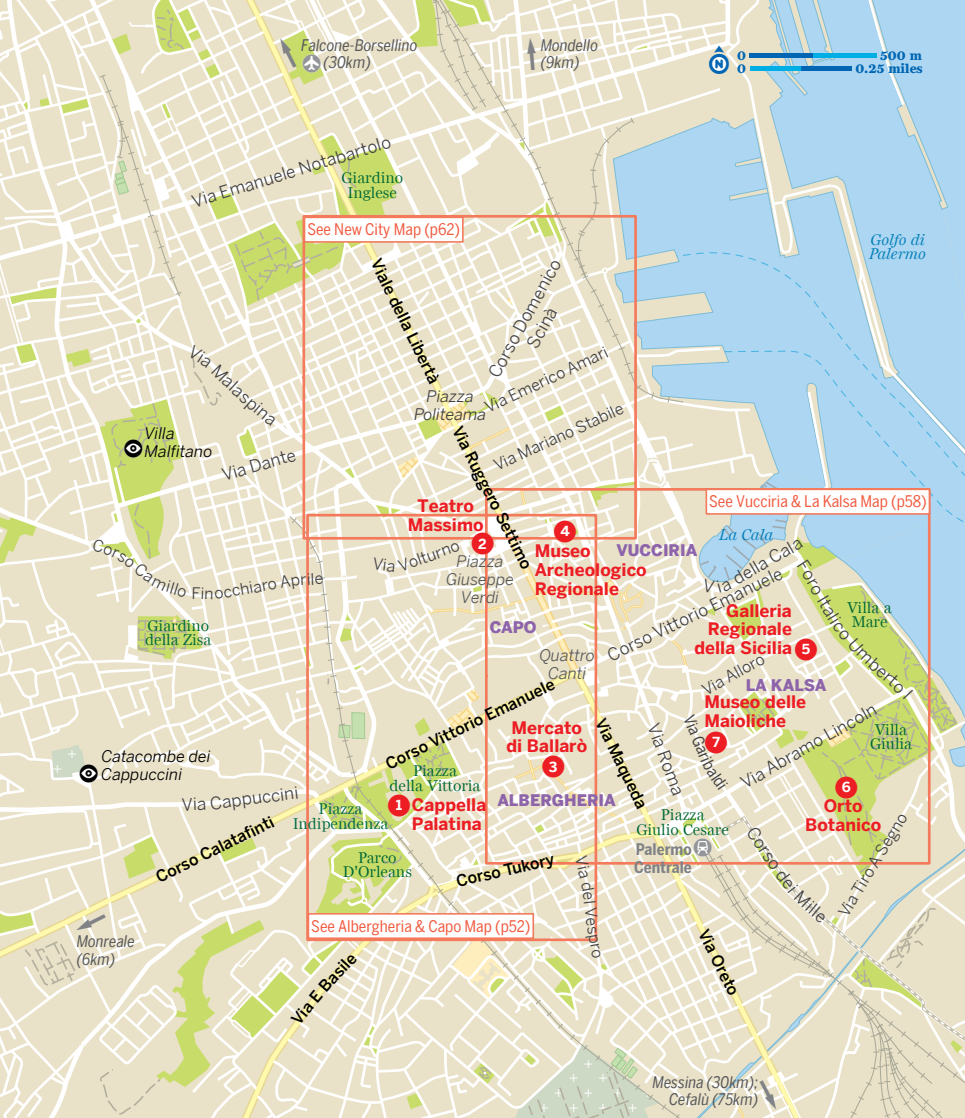
Lower prices and pleasant weather combine to make springtime a perfect season for visiting Palermo.

July

Join the throngs in celebration of Santa Rosalia. Summer performances fill the open-air Teatro di Verdura.

Sep & Oct

Optimal late-season diving conditions without the crowds in the crystal-clear waters off Ustica.



Palermo Highlights

- 1 Cappella Palatina (p53)**
Basking in Palermo's heady multicultural past amid Byzantine mosaics and Arabic marble-work.
- 2 Teatro Massimo (p67)**
Demanding an encore at one of Europe's opera house belles.
- 3 Mercato di Ballarò (p54)**
Diving into a gut-rumbling torrent of buxom produce,

heady aromas and hollering market vendors.

- 4 Museo Archeologico Regionale (p61)**
Pondering the art and tastes of the ancients at this archaeological treasure trove.
- 5 Galleria Regionale della Sicilia (p56)**
Catching up on centuries of Sicilian art in a magnificent *palazzo*.

- 6 Orto Botanico (p60)**
Finding refuge from the traffic and crowds among trees and sleepy cats in this raffish oasis.
- 7 Museo delle Maioliche (p57)**
Enjoying a private tour of rare and precious maiolica tiles at this under-the-radar treasure.