



# Palermo

## Includes →

Palermo .....	51
Around the Quattro Canti .....	51
Albergheria.....	53
Capo .....	56
Vucciria.....	57
La Kalsa .....	61
The New City .....	63
Mondello.....	80
Monreale.....	80
Solunto .....	81
Ustica.....	82

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Trattoria Il Maestro del Brodo (p66)
- ➔ Trattoria Ai Cascinari (p67)
- ➔ Piccolo Napoli (p67)
- ➔ Ferro di Cavallo (p64)
- ➔ Antica Focacceria San Francesco (p65)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Palazzo Pantaleo (p252)
- ➔ BB22 (p252)
- ➔ B&B Amelie (p252)
- ➔ Butera 28 (p252)
- ➔ Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa (p253)

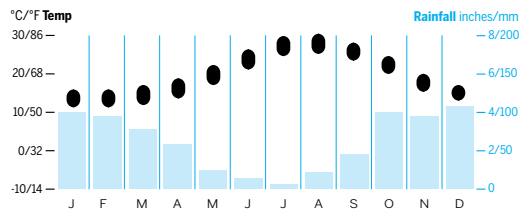
## Why Go?

Flamboyant, feisty and full of life, Palermo evokes a strong response from visitors and residents alike. Its car-choked streets, rubbish-strewn pavements and decrepit infrastructure cause everyone to pull out their hair at one stage or another, but it's easy to overlook the city's problems when you enter a church full of luminously beautiful Byzantine mosaics, wander along a street of stately baroque *palazzi* or witness the genial banter between canny stall owners and bargain-hunting housewives at a street market. Exploring can be exhausting, but it's well and truly worth it.

Palermo is also an ideal base for excursions to surrounding attractions, including the magnificent mosaics at Monreale, the beach community of Mondello, the island of Ustica with its pristine marine reserve, and the inland town of Corleone, famous for its groundbreaking Mafia museum.

## When to Go

### Palermo



**April–May** Lower prices and nice weather make spring perfect for visiting, with displays of fruit and veg jazzing up the markets.

**July** Join the party in celebration of Santa Rosalia, the city's patron saint, whose image is paraded on a decorated carriage.

**September–October** Enjoy optimal late-season diving conditions without the crowds in the crystal-clear waters off Ustica.

## Getting Around

Walking is the best way to experience central Palermo's markets and architecture. Traffic and limited parking make driving challenging, and there's excellent public transport into town from the airport. Palermo's port is a 10-minute walk from Piazza Politeama, heart of the new city. From here, local buses whiz down Via Roma and Via Maqueda to Palermo Centrale, where trains serve destinations near and far.

### THREE PERFECT DAYS

#### Medieval Masterpieces

Palermo's wealth of Arab, Norman and Byzantine masterpieces is enough to fill an entire day. Begin with the city's crown jewel, Palazzo dei Normanni (p55), where the sparkling mosaics of King Roger's royal bedroom are only a prelude to his magnificent Cappella Palatina (p55). In the afternoon, visit the dazzling Cattedrale di Monreale (p80) or the architectural smorgasbords at Palermo's Cattedrale (p56) and San Giovanni degli Eremiti (p56). End your day at Piazza Bellini (p53), home to the exquisite domed churches of La Martorana (p53) and San Cataldo (p53).

#### Baroque Beauties

Admire the quartet of baroque facades at Quattro Canti (Map p58) and the exuberant cascade of naked nymphs at Fontana Pretoria (Map p58). Lunch nearby at Ferro di Cavallo (p64) or Maestro del Brodo (p66), then tour the city's fabulous oratories (Santa Cita (p60), San Domenico (p61), San Lorenzo (p61)), where Giacomo Serpotta's masterful stucco relief steals the show. After dinner, catch an opera at the equally ornate Teatro Massimo (p68).

#### Under the Palermitan Sun

Wander through the bustling markets of Capo (p56) and Ballarò in the morning. Lunch on street snacks from a sidewalk vendor amid the greenery of Orto Botanico (p63) or Giardino Garibaldi (Map p58; Piazza Marina; ☀ 24hr), then spend the afternoon on the beach in nearby Mondello. In the evening, head to the Teatro di Verdura (p68), Palermo's open-air summer theatre, and dine under the stars at the onsite cafe.

## Getting Away From It All

- ➔ **Ustica** Catch a ferry to one of the Med's top dive spots.
- ➔ **Villa Malfitana** Wander through the serene salons and gardens of this belle époque mansion.
- ➔ **Hammam** Sip mint tea on cushions after an evening relaxing in Palermo's Arabic-style steam baths.

### DON'T MISS

Taking time to stumble upon unexpected surprises. Join the *passaggiata* (evening stroll), plunge into the maelstrom of a street market, go bar-hopping on Via Chiavettieri or Via Spinuzza, or seek out rare architectural treasures like the Capo building facade that's half baroque church, half industrial rolling doors (yes, it really exists!).

## Best Nights Out

- ➔ Teatro Massimo (p68)
- ➔ Kursaal Kalhesa (p67)
- ➔ Cuticchio Mimmo (p68)
- ➔ Hammam (p62)
- ➔ Teatro di Verdura (p68)

## Best Street Food

- ➔ Francu U Vastiddaru (p66)
- ➔ I Cuochini (p66)
- ➔ Antica Focacceria San Francesco (p65)
- ➔ Friggitoria Chiluzzo (p66)

## Resources

- ➔ [www.seepalermo.com](http://www.seepalermo.com) English-language info.
- ➔ [www.unospiteapalermo.it](http://www.unospiteapalermo.it) Info about hotels, restaurants, museums, churches, monuments and transport.
- ➔ [www.balarm.it](http://www.balarm.it) For cultural events.
- ➔ [www.lonelyplanet.com/italy/sicily/palermo](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/italy/sicily/palermo) Planning advice, author recommendations, traveller reviews and insider tips.