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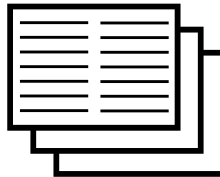
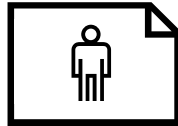
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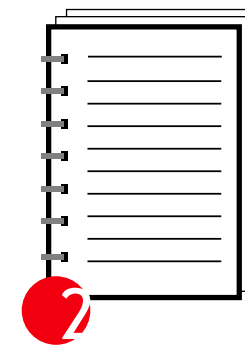
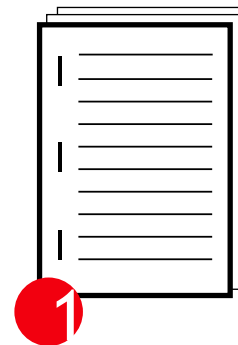
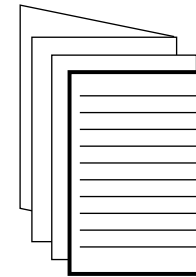
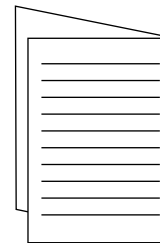
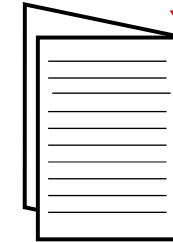
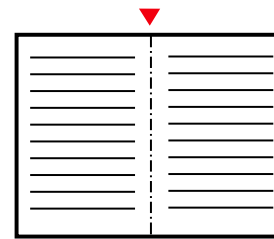
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assembling the guide



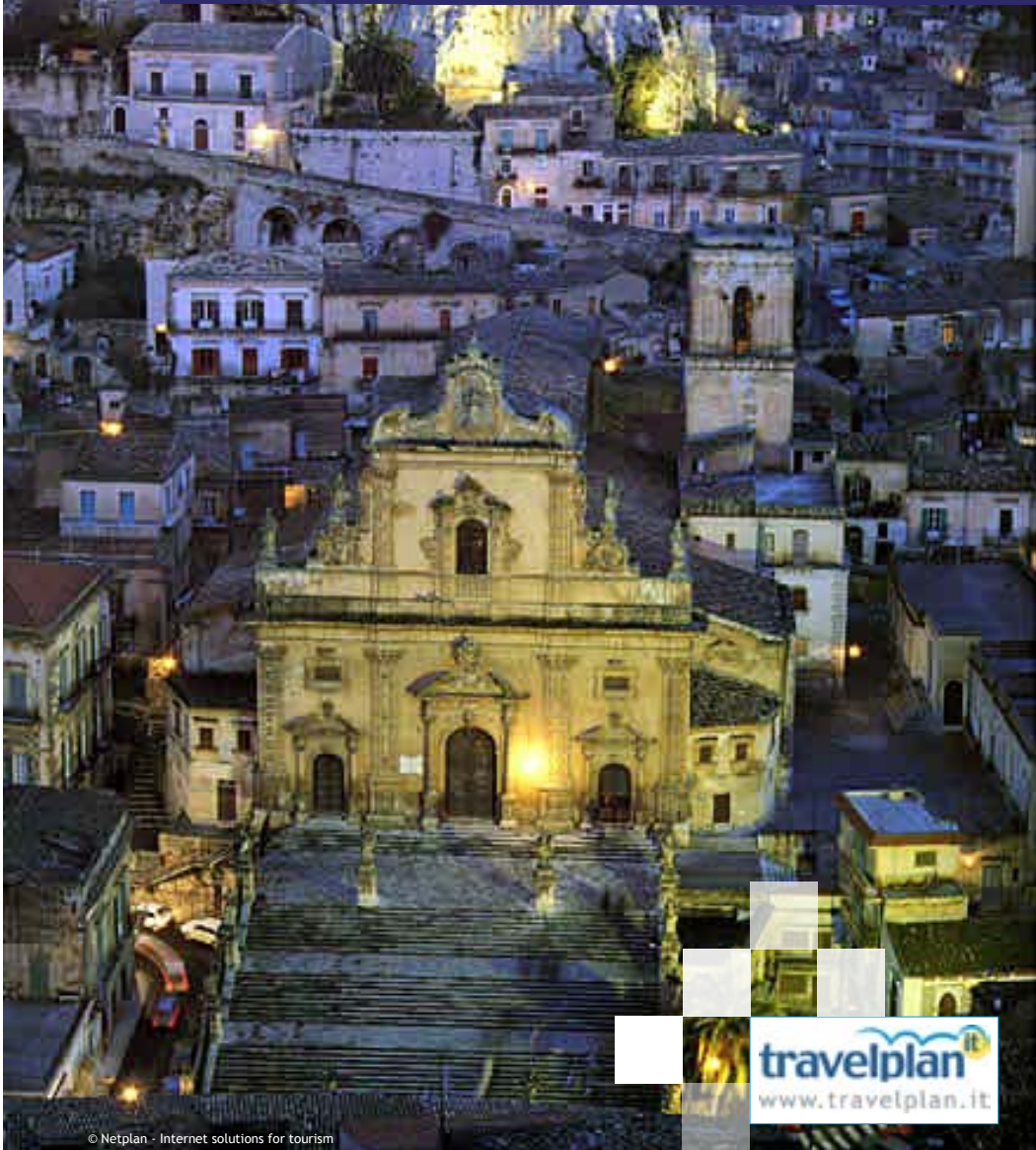
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THE RAGUSA CITY GUIDE





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History and culture



Ragusa: Ragusa Ibla

In the 14th century B.C., some **Sicilian** populations settled on the **Ibla Hill** and founded a city that they called **Hylea Heraea**. The first findings of colonization by the **Greeks** date back to the 7th century, findings that can still be seen today in the **Greek Necropolis**.

From the 3rd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D. almost all Sicily, including Ragusa, fell under the rule of the **Roman Empire**.

After the fall of the empire, the **Byzantines** took over from the Romans and kept power for about five centuries.

During Byzantine rule, Ragusa was almost completely fortified to defend itself from the continuous **Barbarian** attacks, although few architectural findings remain intact from that period.

Between the 8th and the 13th centuries, the area was run by the **Arabs**.

This was a particularly prosperous period for Ragusa and Sicily, economically, culturally and socially. The **Normans** landed in Sicily in 1081, and reached Ragusa about 10 years later. They took over from the Arabs in ruling

the city. After a short period under **Swabian** rule, Ragusa then fell to the **French**.

After the **Sicilian Vespers** revolt (1282), Ragusa and Modica freed themselves of the French **Anjous** and fell under the Spanish **Aragon** dynasty.

They thus became "counties". Just four years later, in 1286, the two counties joined together and became the **County of Modica**, that was run for almost a century by the powerful **Chiaramonte** family, with a certain degree of autonomy. The County also prospered economically. The population increased and settled in the high part of the city too.

The Chiaramonte family rule ended with the sentencing to death (never carried out) of the last heir, who was found guilty of rebelling against the Aragons. Around 1400, another dynasty took over, this time the **Cabrera** family, who represented a violent and aggressive expansionist policy. This period was marked by continuous popular revolts against the Cabrera family.

In 1480 Anna Cabrera married **Federico Henriquez**, a descendent of the Aragons, and offered him the County of Modica as her marriage dowry.

The County remained in the hands of the Henriquez until **1702**, when the last heir of the family sided with Charles of Austria and was executed. A few years before, Ragusa and most of Eastern Sicily had been hit by an even more tragic event: A devastating **earthquake** struck the area in **1693**, destroying everything.

Ragusa recovered from the trauma, and immediately began large-scale rebuilding. The city soon became a wonderful monument to Sicilian Baroque style.

From 1713, the **Savoia dynasty**, the **Austrians** and the **Bourbons** alternated in ruling the city of Ragusa, and the rest of the island. The Bourbons were the rulers at the time of Sicily's joining with Naples, creating the **Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (1816)**.

A short while after the city was annexed

to the **Kingdom of Italy (1861)**, the two centers of the city were distinguished with the name of **Ragusa**, the upper, recently built part and **Ragusa Ibla**, the lower, older part (1865) Ragusa obtained the title of **Provincial Capital** in 1926. There are now 2 boroughs under the province of Ragusa.

Churches and Museums



Ragusa: Cathedral of San Giorgio

The churches that have been included in the **Unesco World Heritage List** and the most interesting museums in Ragusa.

Cathedral (Duomo) of San Giorgio

This cathedral stands at the top of a monumental staircase that has 250 steps. It was designed in 1738 by the architect Rosario Gagliardi, while the imposing neoclassical dome was built around 1820, a copy of the Pantheon in Paris.

Church of Santa Maria delle Scale

This church was rebuilt after the earthquake in 1693 on top of the original fourteenth century site.

The Church of Santa Maria delle Scale connects the more recent High Ragusa to the older Ragusa Ibla with a picturesque staircase with 242 steps.

Church of Purgatory (Purgatorio)

This church was finished shortly before the earthquake in 1693 and miraculously survived without damage.

Starting from the 18th century, considerable renovations and extensions were carried out, that created a new church, which was even more majestic than the first.

Church of Santa Maria dell'Itria

The original church that was built in the 14th century was completely destroyed by the earthquake.

The church was later rebuilt and extended in pure Baroque Sicilian style.

The interior is very interesting. It has five altars full of sculptures and carvings of flower garlands.

Church of Santa Maria del Gesù

The Convent and the Church were built starting from 1639 using recycled materials from the abandoned Castle of Ragusa.

Unlike the Convent, the Church was damaged by the earthquake and then almost completely rebuilt in 1700.

The entire building was constructed on four floors and is 21 meters high.

Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli

In the 18th century, some Ragusa people found an antique picture of the Madonna with her child just outside the city.

This finding was immediately interpreted as a miracle that was celebrated with the new church dedicated to the Madonna of Miracles that all the citizens took part in.

Although it was left unfinished, the church is interesting, especially due to its original style of a drawn-out octagonal shape.

Church of San Francesco all'Immacolata

This ancient church was built in honor of San Francesco in the 14th century.

The church was partly damaged during the 1693 earthquake: The remains of the original Church, such as the portal and the bottom of the bell tower, were incorporated into the new structure that was completed in record time in 1711.

Church of San Filippo Neri

The Church was built a few years after Filippo Neri was made a saint (1622) and was virtually undamaged by the earthquake. The building was renovated around the second half of the 18th century: large windows were opened up on the side façades and a vault was built to replace the old wooden ceiling.

Church of San Giuseppe

The church was built following the wishes of the Benedictine monks between 1756 and 1796. The main façade, with its carvings and statues of various saints, is worthy of note. Inside there are charming ebony, painted glass and tile decorations.

Church of San Giorgio

The first Church of San Giorgio stood near the Ibleo Garden, but only the sumptuous door in Gothic-Catalan style remained of the original building after the earthquake in 1693.

After the earthquake the Church was rebuilt in another place according to the project of the architect Rosario Gagliardi. The Church stands on top of a large staircase and has an imposing "tower-like" façade.

Church of San Giovanni Battista

The original part of the church, that was seriously damaged by the earthquake, stood under the medieval castle walls. Later on (1694), the Church of San Giovanni Battista was rebuilt in the "new" Ragusa.

The church was completed in just four months but its limited size was soon found to be inadequate and after a few years a much larger, imposing church was built. The façade that can be seen today is full of marble decorations, columns and statues.

Ibleo Regional archaeological museum

From the Neolithic era up until the late ancient times: archaeological findings from ancient settlements that existed in the area around Ragusa.

Embroidery and threadwork museum

This interesting museum is in **Chiaromonte Gulgi**, 19 km from Ragusa. It is worth a visit, even if it is outside the city. It provides a detailed reconstruction of the atmosphere and the environment in which the famous Sicilian embroidery was carried out.

Historical buildings and monuments



Ragusa: Palazzo La Rocca

All the Baroque palaces that are included in **Unesco's World Heritage List**:

Palazzo della Cancelleria - The Chancellery

This palace, built in the 18th century, was later bought by the Borough council and turned into a chancellery. The façade includes a balcony, a tribune and large windows on the side.

Palazzo Vescovile Schininà - The Bishop's Palace

Two large entrance doors, decorated with natural limestone elements, lead to the palace's two wings, one of which still belongs to the Schininà family. The other wing belongs to the Clergy.

Palazzo la Rocca

This palace was built in 1765 on the wishes of Baron La Rocca who set up his residence there. The façade has several balconies that are held up by different sized brackets and some interesting anthropomorphic figures. The rooms on the first floor contain some

authentic eighteenth-century furnishings.

Palazzo Bestini

This palace is famous for the disturbing masks sculpted onto the principal façade: The head of a deformed, ragged beggar, the head of an aristocratic Sicilian and the head of an Oriental personage with a turban.

Palazzo Cosentini

The decorations on the balcony brackets are particularly interesting: masks sculpted into the stone representing deformed, grotesque faces, some of which hold horrid, poisonous animals such as scorpions and snakes between their teeth.

Palazzo Sortino Trono

This palace was built in 1778 according to the wishes of Don Ignazio Sortino Trono, on the foundations of some houses that previously belonged to the family that had been destroyed by the earthquake in 1693.

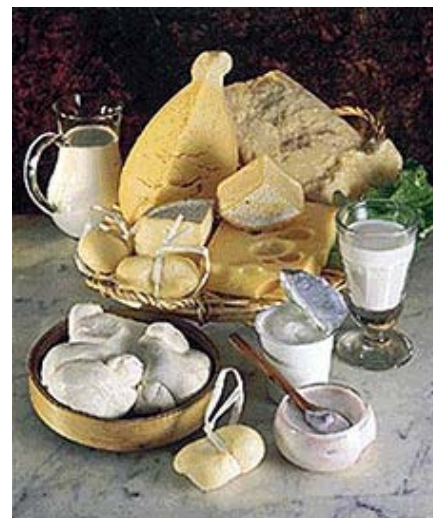
Palazzo Zacco

The brackets that hold up the five balconies on the side facade are interesting: a musician playing the maracas and a disturbing mask that sneers at passers-by.

Palazzo Battaglia

This palace, located in Ragusa Ibla, was built in 1724 and later expanded (1748). It became even more majestic than the first architectural plan.

Eating and Drinking



Ragusa: caciocavallo ragusano

In the fertile area of Sicily, many typical products are grown, such as the famous, sweet **Uva Italia** and many types of **olives**. The tonda di Iblea, the moresca and the nocellara etnea are all olives that produce a different type of **extra-virgin olive oil**.

The area surrounding Ragusa is the only one where carobs are grown. **Carob trees** are part and parcel of the landscape. This type of fruit, introduced into Italy by the Arabs, produces "carcao" used to make candy, liquor and flour for cakes.

Honey is also a typical product of the province of Ragusa, especially the honey that comes from the Iblei Mountains.

There is also the Ragusa product par excellence, that has been produced for centuries: **Caciocavallo ragusano**, a tasty cheese formed into a parallelepiped shape, made from **Modica cow's** milk. This cheese is used for antipasti and desserts, and can be fresh and sweet or ripe and spicy. There are many types of recipes based on this cheese that are served in the Ragusa restaurants, for example "**cascavaddu all'argintera**", made

with slices of caciocavallo, placed in beaten egg and then fried in oil.

A typical menu served by one of the several **restaurants in Ragusa** may start off with a typical antipasto dish such as **scaccia ragusana**: a tasty focaccia pizza bread filled with tomato sauce and chili pepper, and grated caciocavallo cheese.

Cavatieddi are a fresh pasta dish, served in Ragusa and in Modica, with a sauce based on pork stew. As a second course you can choose a plate of cold meat "**a stemperata**": meat with a sauce made from garlic, olives, capers, carrots, celery and mint, fried and wet with vinegar. You can also try **tripe cooked in Ragusa style**, cooked together with almonds, nuts and cinnamon.

Biancomangiare is one of the desserts recommended. It is a typical sweet made in the province of Ragusa based on almonds. The original recipe includes finely chopped almonds, sugar, corn starch, lemon rind, cinnamon and cream, all mixed together and poured into the typical terracotta moulds. Once it has become solid Biancomangiare is turned out onto plates covered in lemon leaves and served.

Shopping



Ragusa: Modica chocolate

Ragusa is famous for its embroidery and in particular the “**sfilato siciliano**”, a special embroidery technique started up at the end of the XIV century in Eastern Sicily “Sfilato siciliano”, Sicilian threadwork, is still used today to make matrimonial bed and dining linen and is carried out on linen fabric with fine threads.

Another technique used in the area is “**filet**” started up in France, which later spread to Ragusa.

“Filet” consists of creating a net of knots (“fisherman style”) and then creating a design by placing the net on a frame.

Beautiful fabrics can be bought in the shops in Ragusa, decorated with “filet”, and also tablecloths, towels and linen sheets worked with the “sfilato siciliano” style.

Are you interested in food souvenirs? Many rural farmhouses in Ragusa and the area sell typical, healthy produce such as delicious homemade preserves, tasty cheese and salami.

If you go to Modica for a trip, you will be able to buy a real delicacy, that you can take

home as a present or keep for yourselves: the famous, authentic **Modica chocolate** that can be bought in delicious bars in all the confectioners in Ragusa.

Hotels and lodgings



Ragusa: Ragusa Ibla

Do you wish to visit this wonderful city-monument of Sicilian Baroque style? You have no end of choice, depending on your budget and your needs. You can choose one of the hotel in Ragusa, and choose the category that best suits your needs: from one to five stars.

If you are on a tight budget, but you don't want to give up on the comfort of being in the city center, we recommend you book a room in one of the bed & breakfast in ragusa, or a room in one of the Guest Houses in Ragusa.

Are you interested in getting to know the area around Ragusa? You could use one of the rural farmhouses in Ragusa as a base for your excursions. Another possibility you have is to stay in Modica: rural farmhouses, bed & breakfasts and hotels in Modica. There is no end of choice.

Events



Ragusa: Ibla Buskers, Street artists' festival

Travelplan.it has prepared a selection of the most interesting events that take place in Ragusa for you.

If you are planning a trip to this city at the same time as one of these events, we recommend you book well in advance.

Festival of San Giovanni

June 24th to August 29th

To celebrate the city's patron saint, the tradition was once that of eating fresh broad beans, the symbol of pardoned sins, and of lighting bonfires (San Giovanni fires) to dance around on the eve of the festival.

Nowadays, June 24th is used to celebrate the birth of the Saint with a mass and the exhibiting of his remains, while instead there is a procession of his followers on August 29th, the day of his martyrdom, who dress up to represent the various phases of the saint's life.

The procession ends with a cart that carries the papier-mache statues of the twelve disciples.

Ibla Buskers. Street artists' festival

October

Since 1994, Ragusa Ibla's streets and squares have been invaded by street artists from all over the world every October for a week: jugglers, acrobats, clowns and others all perform in exciting shows.

Festival of San Giorgio

last Sunday in May

Suspended between truth and legend, the story of San Giorgio is one of the most imaginative and incredible of all Christian tradition. The Saint defeated a dragon and carried out several miracles. Each year Ragusa Ibla celebrates its patron saint (in Ragusa the patron saint is San Giovanni Battista). On the last Sunday in May, the faithful take bread to the Church of San Giorgio. At the end of the festival the bread is delivered to the farmers and the workers in the fields, as a good wish for the harvest. The statue and the silver box containing the saint's remains are then carried across the town in a procession.

La Dolce Vita



Ragusa: Ibla ragusa by night

Ragusa Ibla has a large number of trattorias and restaurants, bars, coffee shops, pubs and clubs: a romantic walk

Another center of Ragusa dolce vita is the Marina di Ragusa, once called Mazzarelli. Marina di Ragusa is famous seaside resort, one of the best in the south east of Sicily, and is busy in winter and in summer. There are long beaches with golden sand, where you can find restaurants and clubs that are popular with both the tourists and the locals. The busiest lounge bars are the ones along the *Lungomare* Andrea Doria such as the Queen Mary and the Victoria.

There is also one of Europe's largest discotheques in Marina di Ragusa: the Koala Maxi: 18,000 square meters (11 dance floors indoors and outdoors) with special theme evenings and live concerts.

A special day



Ragusa: Cathedral of San Giorgio

Ragusa is made up of two separate centers: the old part, called **Ragusa Ibla** is the low part while the more modern part is higher up. The two towns are separated by the **Valle dei Ponti**, a deep, disturbing gorge that is crossed by four bridges that connect Ragusa Ibla to the town higher up. Our itinerary includes at least one night in one of the hotels in Ragusa, so that you have the whole day to visit this wonderful Baroque city.

Morning

Our itinerary starts off in the high part of Ragusa, from Piazza Libertà, at the beginning of **Via Roma**, one of the city's main roads. From Via Roma you must go to The Ibleo Archeological Museum, where you can admire the findings of ancient settlements in the area. After visiting the Museum, continue up Via Roma up to the crossroads with Corso Italia where there is the splendid Cathedral of San Giovanni Battista. Continuing up Corso Italia on foot, you can admire some Baroque buildings such as Palazzo Bertini. Carry on until you reach the Church of Santa Maria

delle Scale that looks down onto **Ragusa Ibla**, and which connects the two towns with a staircase of 242 steps. After you have walked down all the steps, you might be hungry so take a break for lunch in one of the restaurants in Ragusa in this area. We recommend you try at least one dish based on **caciocavallo ragusano** and you mustn't miss a typical dessert such as **biancomangiare**.

Afternoon

After eating your fill, you can start discovering **Ragusa Ibla**, the oldest part of the city where most of the churches and Baroque buildings are found.

There are many churches to visit: you mustn't miss Santa Maria dell'Idria, the splendid and imposing Basilica di San Giorgio and the Church of San Giuseppe. Before dinner, why not go for a relaxing, refreshing walk in the splendid **Ibleo Gardens of the Villa Comunale** where there are some beautiful Baroque churches.

Evening

After learning more about the Ragusa cooking tradition, we recommend you go for a walk in the center. For the social-life lovers, we suggest you continue the evening in one of the clubs on the promenade at Marina di Ragusa. If you have an extra day to hand, we advise you go on a trip to the **Castello di Donnafugata**, a castle 20 km from Ragusa. This majestic castle dates back to the 17th century, with Renaissance and Gothic-Venetian style galleries, 122 rooms, a huge panoramic terrace and 8 hectares of parkland.

Modica and Scicli



Ragusa: Scicli, Municipal Buildings

Two wonderful Baroque cities about **20 kilometers** from **Ragusa**, ideal for a trip outside the city in search of art and history.

Modica

This picturesque town lies 20 km from Ragusa, in the southern part of the **Iblei Mountains**. It is divided into a high and low part, both completely rebuilt after the devastating earthquake of 1693. The town has many palaces and churches in **late Baroque style**, that stand between the typical lanes and the buildings. The **Church of San Giorgio**, dedicated to the city's patron saint, is a monumental example of Baroque architecture including a staircase of 250 steps, that was built after the church in 1818. A walk along **Corso Umberto** is well worth it. This road is Modica's viewing lounge, right up to Piazza Principe di Napoli, where you can find the Municipal Buildings (Palazzo Municipale) and the **castle walls** that have survived time and nature's hazards. After visiting the city, you can spend time discovering one of the most pleasant characteristics of Modica:

the cooking. There are many typical dishes in the city, but the most famous product is without a doubt Modica chocolate. This special chocolate is still made following ancient craft traditions, which guarantee the special granularity of the product, due to the sugar crystals that remain undissolved in the chocolate. A tradition that started during the period of Spanish rule, that imported cocoa seeds from the New World. The **Modica chocolate** bars are traditionally 15 centimeters long and can either be natural or flavored with cinnamon, chili pepper or vanilla. The chocolate is used in many recipes served in the Ragusa and Modica restaurants, such as, for example, the **"mpanatigghi"**, small pies filled with meat and chocolate.

Scicli

A Baroque jewel 24 km from Ragusa and 5 km from the sea, Scicli lies in a charming basin surrounded by rocky hills and is often therefore called "the town with three hills". There are many churches and Baroque palaces built between 1700 and 1800 that deserve to be seen: the Church of Santa Teresa, the Church of San Giovanni, the Church of San Bartolomeo and **Palazzo Beneventano**, included on Unesco's World Heritage List. Another extremely interesting place is **Chiarafura**, with its caves dug out in the tufa rock and used as houses until 1958. One of Scicli's most charming aspects are the religious festivals and events: The nativity scenes set up in the caves, the Easter celebrations and the "horse parade" in honor of San Giuseppe in March, that travels from Scicli to the town quarter of **Donnalucata**. In May there is also the great historical event of the "Battle of the Militia" a battle during which the Normans beat the Saracens (1091).

A trip to the far end of Sicily



Ragusa: Isola delle Correnti

Travelplan.it has prepared an itinerary for you that you can complete in one day, starting from Ragusa in the early morning and returning to the city in the evening. Take your swimming costume with you for a refreshing dip and wear comfortable shoes for a walk among history and nature. Here are the stop-off points that we suggest:

Isola delle Correnti

The Isola delle Correnti stands at about 60 km from Ragusa and 8 km from Capo Passero, at the far end of Sicily. This strip of land lies just under the parallel of Tunis, where the Mediterranean Sea and the Ionian Sea merge into each other. The island is linked to the coast by an artificial wharf. It is one of the favorite places for surf and windsurf lovers, due to the waves and the winds that lap it. Nature lovers also love the place: in spite of the sparse vegetation, the Isola delle Correnti is home to wild rabbits, albatrosses and other species of birds, and also to several fish species in the surrounding sea. We suggest that this be your first stop from Ragusa: enjoy

the sun and sea as much as you can! When you feel relaxed, you can start off on your trip again.

Pachino

After lying in the sun for a while and refreshing yourselves in the crystal-clear waters, turn back and head back towards Ragusa. After a few kilometers you will reach Pachino. This characteristic village is famous for its wine production and for its tasty **Pachino cherry tomatoes** that are grown in the surrounding land. An interesting place nearby is the **Grotta di Calafarina** in Marzamemi, caves where you find the remains and findings of ancient settlements.

Ispica

Carrying on the return road towards Ragusa, we recommend you make a brief detour towards Ispica, a pretty town 170 meters above sea level. After spending a bit of time in the town center, visiting the Baroque churches and palaces, why not go for a walk to the **Cava d'Ispica**, passing by the artificial ponds that lie along the route. The Cava is a deep gorge that contains several archaeological finds: ancient huts from the Bronze Age, prehistoric necropolis, caves, Byzantine oratories, ruins of churches and lots more too.

Four beaches around Ragusa



Ragusa: Torre Cabrera in Pozzallo

The beaches near Ragusa are spectacular: golden sand, clear water, clean and uncrowded beaches. A real paradise just a short distance from the city.

Travelplan.it has prepared a list of beaches for you that you just can't miss if you still have a bit of time to visit the area around Ragusa.

Marina di Ragusa

This is the most famous seaside resort in this part of Sicily: there are modern, efficient tourist facilities, beautiful beaches and a lively **nightlife**.

Marina di Modica

This place is beautiful at any time of year, with its milder climate compared to the city. The bay is a surf and windsurf lovers' paradise, thanks to its perfect exposure to the winds.

Pozzallo

This beach is 30km from Ragusa, looking out onto the sea and with splendid Mediterranean

scrub behind it, where carob trees dominate the landscape. The beaches are truly wonderful, the water is crystal-clear and the landscape is historically and culturally interesting.

The most important monument in this medieval village is the majestic **Torre Cabrera**, a tower built around 1400 to defend the place from pirate attacks.

Sampieri

This tiny village near to Scicli and Modica is famous for its beautiful beach looking out onto the "burnt factory" that was a brick factory partly destroyed many years ago by a fire. The remains of the building are still part and parcel of the landscape. The village is also characteristic, with its stone cottages that look romantically out to sea.



Ragusa web sites

Hotels & Lodging

[3 Three Stars Hotels...](#)

Eating & Drinking

[Restaurants...](#)

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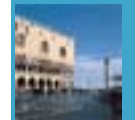
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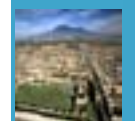
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Pompeii: In search of a lost civilization
The city of Pompeii was established in the XII century B.C. and enjoyed great prosperity from the

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- Umbria
- Valle d'Aosta
- Veneto

Travel Plan Italy Guide by Cities:

- Aosta
- Asiago & 7 comuni
- Asolo
- Assisi
- Belluno & Dolomiti Venete
- Bolzano
- Bressanone
- Caorle & Bibione
- Capri
- Catania
- Cervia & Cesenatico's Beaches
- Chianti, Valdelsa, Valdarno
- Comacchio's Beaches
- Como Lake & Lecco
- Cortina d'Ampezzo
- Courmayeur Monte Bianco
- Filba & Capraia
- Florence
- Garda Lake - Eastern Side
- Ischia
- Jesolo & Frazione
- Lucca & Garfagnana
- Madonna di Campiglio
- Pinzola, Val Rendena
- Merano
- Milan
- Monte Cervino
- Montecatini Terme
- Naples
- Padua
- Palermo
- Portofino & Golfo del Tigullio
- Ragusa
- Ravenna's Beaches
- Ravenna City
- Rimini, Riccione, Cattolica
- Riviera del Fiori, Sanremo & Imperia
- Riviera del Brenta
- Rome
- Rovereto - Vallagarina
- Rovigo & Delta del Po
- Siena
- San Martino di Castrozza, Primiero, Val Venoi
- Siracusa
- Sorrento & Amalfi
- Taormina
- Terme & Colli Euganeie
- Trento
- Trieste
- Turin
- Val di Fassa
- Val di Fiemme
- Venice
- Verona
- Versilia & Viareggio
- Vicenza

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