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SIS



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PALERMO

Practical Guide

INDEX

GETTING TO PALERMO	1
HOW TO REACH THE VENUE	1
SPECIAL EVENTS	4
Welcome Party	4
Social Dinner	4
SUGGESTED ONE DAY ITINERARY	4
A BRIEF TURIST GUIDE OF PALERMO	5
CULTURE	5
Churches	5
Historic Market.....	8
Galleries and Museums	9
SHOPPING	11
WHERE TO EAT	11
Street food.....	11
Finger food	11
Restaurant & Pizza.....	11
Restaurant	12
Sandwiches & “Fast Food”	12
Ice cream	12
WHERE TO DRINK	12
Tea & chocolate + home cakes & cookies	12
Cocktail & Night drink.....	12
MOVIDA	13
FREE WI-FI	13

GETTING TO PALERMO

FROM "Falcone - Borsellino" (PALERMO) AIRPORT.

Palermo is about 35 km far from Palermo.

Bus: The Company "Prestia & Comandè" runs the transports from/to Palermo Centrale and Airport. There are several bus stops in the centre (see "departures"), however all the suggested hotels are reasonably close (5 min by car) to the terminus "Palermo Centrale" station (at Piazza Giulio Cesare).

Train: For information go to Trenitalia website. To know the timetable, write "Palermo Centrale" and "Punta Raisi" in the fields "From" and "To". Price of ticket: euro 5.80. All the suggested hotels are reasonably close (5 min by car) to "Palermo Centrale" station.

Taxi: The Organizing Committee made a deal with

- the shuttle company Spada Transfer Sicily offering a very special 25€ price per ride to conference delegates willing to use the service from/to the airport. If you are willing to use this service, prior to departure, please e-mail the company at: spadatransferinsicily@hotmail.it mentioning the AISP conference and your arrival time and flight number. A cab driver will be waiting for you at the gate exit with a cardboard reporting your name and the conference logo. Tel. +39 3298611040
- the Cooperativa Trinacria that offer these rides:
 - airport-hotel (4 people), day-time: 38 Euro
 - airport-hotel (4 people), nighttime: 40 Euro
 - airport-hotel (5/6 people): 42 Europlease, contact it at +390916878 (special number) or info@radiotaxitrinacria.it

FROM "Birgi" (TRAPANI) AIRPORT.

Trapani is about 100km far from Palermo.

Bus: The company "Terravision", in partnership with "Autolinee Salemi", runs the transports from/to Palermo Centrale station and Birgi Airport. The bus terminal is located close to the train station.

HOW TO REACH THE VENUE

The venue for the meeting is the "Polo Didattico" (also known as "Edificio 19") which is located within the University complex in via Ernesto Basile.

From Palermo Central Station (Piazza Giulio Cesare)

On foot. It takes approximately 30 minutes to reach the venue (about 1.2 Km). Take Corso Tukory, continue straight on via Basile and then go in viale delle Scienze within the University complex. Follow the main path and the second big block on the left is the Edificio 19.

By bus. It takes approximately 20 minutes to reach the venue. Take either the bus line 109 or 234 and get off at “Basile Facoltà di Ingegneria” bus stop. The Basile bus stop is just few minutes far from the conference venue. Enter the campus and on the left there is a big block: it is the Edificio 19.

By urban train. It takes approximately 10 minutes to reach the venue. Take the urban train that goes to the airport (Punta Raisi stop) but you have to stop at Palazzo Reale Orleans. It is the second stop. From Palazzo Reale Orleans it takes approximately 10 minutes on foot to reach the conference venue. Follow the main path and the second big block on the left is the Edificio 19. The cost of the ticket is about 1.20 Euro. You can buy the ticket at the sale points or at the ticket machines located inside the stations. For the timetable go to Trenitalia website and write "Palermo Centrale" in the field "From" and "Punta Raisi" in the field "To".

By taxi. Ask for the “Polo Didattico, Edificio 19” in viale delle Scienze (nearby via Ernesto Basile). The Organizing Committee made a deal with:

- the shuttle company Spada Transfer Sicily for the city transport at 10 Euro per ride for max 4 passengers. You may book the shuttle/taxi service by e-mail spadatransferinsicily@hotmail.it or at the following mobile number +39 3298611040.
- the Cooperativa Trinacria offers the old town (such as Piazza Marina/Train station)-Venue (4 people) ride at 12 Euro.
 - Old Town (such as Train Station)-Venue (4 people): 12/15 Euro
contact it at +390916878 (special number) or at info@radiotaxitrinacria.it

From Piazza Politeama

On foot. It takes approximately 50 minutes to reach the venue. Follow the main road via Ruggiero Settimo and turn right at Via Vittorio Emanuele II. Once you have reached a big square (after the Cathedral) Piazza Indipendenza, turn left and go straight to the city park Parco D’Orleans. Follow its wall and on the corner, on the right, you will see the University of Palermo entrance. Follow the main path and the second big block on the left is the Edificio 19.

By bus. It takes approximately 25-30 minutes to reach the venue. Take either the bus line 104 or 108 and stop at “Basile Facoltà di Ingegneria” bus stop. The Basile Facoltà di Ingegneria bus stop is just few minutes far from the conference venue.

By taxi. Ask for the “Polo Didattico, Edificio 19” in viale delle Scienze (nearby via Ernesto Basile). The Organizing Committee made a deal with:

- the shuttle company Spada Transfer Sicily for the city transport at 10 Euro per ride for max 4 passengers. You may book the shuttle/taxi service by e-mail spadatransferinsicily@hotmail.it or at the following mobile number +39 3298611040.
- the Cooperativa Trinacria offers the old town (such as Piazza Marina/Train station)-Venue (4 people) ride at 12 Euro.
 - City center (such as Piazza Politeama)-Venue (4 people): 15 Euro
contact it at +390916878 (special number) or at info@radiotaxitrinacria.it

From Piazza Marina (Location of the Social Dinner and close to the Welcome Party)

On foot. It takes approximately 30 minutes to reach the venue. Follow the main road Via Vittorio Emanuele II. Once you have reached a big square (after the Cathedral) Piazza Indipendenza, turn left and go straight to

the city park Parco D'Orleans. Follow its wall and on the corner, on the right, you will see the University of Palermo entrance. Follow the main path and the second big block on the left is the Edificio 19.

By bus. Take "Linea Verde" (LV) bus to San Giovanni degli Eremiti. From San Giovanni degli Eremiti it takes approximately 15 minutes on foot to reach the conference venue. Behind the church there is the city park Parco D'Orleans. Follow its wall on the left and, on the right, you will see the University of Palermo entrance. Follow the main path and the second big block on the left is the Edificio 19.

Or take the 225 bus in via Vittorio Emanuele II and go to the Central Station. See "from Central Station" section.

By taxi. Ask for the "Polo Didattico, Edificio 19" in viale delle Scienze (nearby via Ernesto Basile). The Organizing Committee made a deal with:

- the shuttle company Spada Transfer Sicily for the city transport at 10 Euro per ride for max 4 passengers. You may book the shuttle/taxi service by e-mail spadatransferinsicily@hotmail.it or at the following mobile number +39 3298611040.
- the Cooperativa Trinacria offers the old town (such as Piazza Marina/Train station)-Venue (4 people) ride at 12 Euro.
 - Old Town-Venue (4 people): 12 Eurocontact it at +390916878 (special number) or at info@radiotaxitrinacria.it

From Palermo Airport

By train. Take the train at the airport terminus (the stop is downstairs the Arrivals) to Palermo Central Station and stop at Palazzo Reale Orleans stop. It takes about 50 minutes. From Palazzo Reale Orleans it takes approximately 10 minutes on foot to reach the conference venue. Follow the main path and the second big block on the left is the Edificio 19. The cost of the train ticket is 5.80 Euro. For the timetable go to Trenitalia website and write "Punta Raisi" and "Palermo Centrale" and in the fields "From" and "To".

By taxi. Ask for the "Polo Didattico, Edificio 19" in viale delle Scienze (nearby via Ernesto Basile). The Organizing Committee made a deal with

- the shuttle company Spada Transfer Sicily offering a very special 25€ price per ride to conference delegates willing to use the service from/to the airport. If you are willing to use this service, prior to departure, please e-mail the company at: spadatransferinsicily@hotmail.it mentioning the AISP conference and your arrival time and flight number. A cab driver will be waiting for you at the gate exit with a cardboard reporting your name and the conference logo. Tel. +39 3298611040
- the Cooperativa Trinacria that offer the airport-venue ride at 40 Euro. Please, contact it at +390916878 (special number) or info@radiotaxitrinacria.it

SPECIAL EVENTS

Welcome Party

Welcome Party will be held at Kursaal Kalhesa (Foro Umberto I, 21) at 7.30 pm - 9.30 pm. The event offers to participants a special selection of Sicilian finger food and wine by the local winery sponsor Mandrarossa.

Social Dinner

Social Dinner will be held at Palazzo Fatta in Piazza Marina, 19 on Thursday night at the price of 30€ per person. Participants will find a desk in the registration area of the Venue where it is possible to book a seat for dinner. Please register before midday on Thursday.

By taxi. The Organizing Committee made a deal with

- the shuttle company Spada Transfer Sicily offering a very special 10€ price per ride to conference delegates willing to use the service in the city. If you are willing to use this service, contact the Company at +39 3298611040 mentioning the AISP conference and your trip.
- the Cooperativa Trinacria that offer the hotel-event ride (4/5 people) at 10 Euro by day and 15 Euro during the night. Please, contact it at +390916878 (special number) mentioning the AISP conference and your trip.

SUGGESTED ONE DAY ITINERARY

Your full day in Palermo could begin by visiting a local outdoor market called Mercato Ballarò. It is so incredibly Sicilian: vendors shout across to one another, locals swarm in front of the fish stands, vibrant colors are everywhere, and gorgeous looking fruit stack in interesting displays. The Ballarò is probably the oldest of Palermo's Arabic markets. The derivation of its name is unsure but may come from the name of the North African village where most of the Arabic traders working in the market originated: Balhara. Nowadays, the market's Arabic roots are still evident.

After the market, you may walk down to the Quattro Canti, or four corners, and then visit two of Palermo's biggest and most well known theaters: Teatro Massimo and Teatro Politeama. Both theaters are painted in bright, sunny colors and perfectly showcase why art and opera are so important here. It is easy to see the influences from around the world here in Sicily. There appears to be an eclectic mix of people creating a more diverse population and culture. Going south-east down Via Maqueda you will come across Piazza Pretoria which is home not only to a splendid fountain but several other impressive buildings including, on the right, the City Hall. The large central fountain is the focal point for sixteen nude statues of nymphs, humans, mermaids and satyrs. If you imagine this being erected during the Inquisition, it is quite easy to imagine why it received its epithet, the "Fountain of Shame".

Behind the City Hall, there is another square, Piazza Bellini where you can see two of Palermo's most interesting churches: the Church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio (more commonly known as La Martorana) and the Church of San Cataldo, instantly recognizable thanks to its trio of red domes. We suggest to visit the Santa Caterina church too.

On the south-east corner of "Quattro Canti", opposite Piazza Pretoria, you can find the church of San Giuseppe dei Teatini. This church, built in 1612, is a must-see for anyone who loves Baroque architecture. If you do not, it might be a good idea to stay away, though it is still quite impressive.

Walking up Corso Vittorio Emanuele, you can find the Cathedral on your right: the remarkable exterior is impressive, while the interior is rather plain in comparison; Emperor Frederick II, "Stupor Mundi" is buried here. Going under Porta Nuova and at Piazza Indipendenza you will find the entrance to the Royal Palace and the Palatine Chapel.

The area around the Norman Palace has long been the seat of Kings and rulers and today it plays host to the Sicilian Regional Parliament. Piazza Indipendenza and Porta Nuova used to mark Palermo's southern boundary, as a transit to the Conca d'Oro valley leading under Monreale. La Capella Palatina (The Palatine Chapel) is probably the most visited monument in Palermo and should not be missed. Once again, it is characterized by a fusion of different architectural styles, most evidently the Byzantine mosaics and the wooden Arabic honeycombed ceiling.

WE STRONGLY SUGGEST THE VISIT OF "STANZE AL GENIO". The Cultural Association Stanze al Genio is located in Via Garibaldi 11, one of the oldest streets of the historic centre of Palermo. The Museum is located in a private house of the historic building Palazzo Torre, built between 1500 and 1600.

The house has been recently renovated: visitors can appreciate the decorated floors and ceilings, from the late 1700s-early 1800s'. The more than 2300 majolica, from Naples and Sicily (late sixteenth century - beginning of the twentieth century), are distributed in 4 rooms, where you can also see smaller collections of old toys, vintage tins, stationery, ink bottles, advertising labels of the mid-twentieth century, and a new section of contemporary ceramics, recently inaugurated.

A BRIEF TOURIST GUIDE OF PALERMO

CULTURE

Churches

San Giuseppe dei Teatini. (*via Vittorio Emanuele II, intersection with via Maqueda*) San Giuseppe dei Teatini is a church located near the Quattro Canti, and is considered one of the most outstanding examples of the Sicilian Baroque in Palermo. The church was built at the beginning of the 17th century by Giacomo Besio, a Genoese member of the Theatines order. It has a majestic though simple façade. In the centre niche is housed a statue of San Gaetano, founder of the Theatines order. Another striking feature is the large dome with a blue and yellow majolica covering. The tambour decorated with double columns, and was designed by Giuseppe Mariani. The belfry tower was designed by Paolo Amato. The interior has a Latin cross plan with a nave and two aisles, divided by marble columns of variable height. The inner decoration is an overwhelming parade of Baroque art, with stuccoes by Paolo Corso and Giuseppe Serpotta. Great frescoes can be seen in the nave, in the vault of the transept: these were painted by Filippo Tancredi, Guglielmo Borremans and Giuseppe Velasquez. The frescoes were severely damaged during World War II, but have been accurately restored. The most important piece of art is however a wood crucifix by Fra' Umile of Petralia. The crypt houses remains of a former church, dedicated to Madonna of Providence.

Santa Caterina. (*piazza bellini, 2*) The church is adjacent to a monastery founded in the fourteenth century by the Dominican nuns. It was begun in 1566 and completed in 1596. The dome and the choir were added respectively in the mid-eighteenth century and in 1863. Santa Caterina faces two squares: the first one is the square where stands the homonymous fountain Pretoria, while the second is Piazza Bellini where you can

visit the Church of Martorana and the church of San Cataldo. What is most striking is the rich decoration of the interior has a single nave, typical of the Counter-Reformation. The decoration of the interiors, as well as many other churches in Palermo, is made by a sumptuous apparatus mixed marble, stucco and frescoes that merge into a single harmonic reading, with the architectural structures bearing.

Martorana. (*piazza bellini, 3*) The Church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio or San Nicolò dei Greci, commonly called the Martorana, overlooking the renowned Piazza Bellini in Palermo, Sicily, southern Italy. Co-Cathedral of Eparchy of Eastern Rite, is part of the Italo-Albanian Catholic Church, Diocese Byzantine-Greek Rite of Piana degli Albanesi. The name Ammiraglio ("admiral") derives from the founder of the church, the Greek admiral and principal minister of King Roger II of Sicily, George of Antioch. The foundation charter of the church (which was initially Eastern Orthodox), in Greek and Arabic, is preserved and dates to 1143; construction may already have begun at this point. In 1193-94, a convent of Benedictine nuns was founded on adjacent property by Eloisa Martorana. In 1433-34, under the rule of King Alfonso of Aragon, this convent absorbed the church, which has since then been commonly known as La Martorana. The nuns extensively modified the church between the 16th century and the 18th century, making major changes to the structure and the interior decoration. The nuns of the Martorana were famous for their moulded marzipan, which they made in the form of various fruits. Although the convent no longer exists, frutta di Martorana are still one of Palermo's most famous and distinctive foodstuffs. The original church was built in the form of a compact cross-in-square ("Greek cross plan"), a common south Italian and Sicilian variation on the standard middle Byzantine church type. The campanile, which is richly decorated with three orders of arches and lodges with mullioned windows, still serves as the main entrance to the Church. Certain elements of the original church, in particular its exterior decoration, show the influence of Islamic architecture on the culture of Norman Sicily. The church is renowned for its spectacular interior, which is dominated by a series of 12th century mosaics executed by Byzantine craftsmen. The mosaics show many iconographic and formal similarities to the roughly contemporary programs in the Cappella Palatina, in Monreale Cathedral and in Cefalù Cathedral, although they were probably executed by a distinct atelier. The walls display two mosaics taken from the original Norman façade, depicting King Roger II, George of Antioch's lord, receiving the crown of Sicily from Jesus, and, on the northern side of the aisle, George himself, at the feet of the Virgin.

Casa Professa. (*piazza Casa Professa, 1*) The Church of the Gesù (chiesa del Gesù) or Casa Professa is one of the most important Baroque churches in the Italian city of Palermo and the interior of Sicily. The Jesuits arrive in Palermo in 1549 and in the late 16th century began building a church adjacent to their mother house (Casa Professa), to plans by the Jesuit architect Giovanni Tristano. The facade is divided into two sections by a cornice. In the lower part there are three portals, above are niches with statues of St. Ignatius of Loyola, a Madonna with Child and Francisco de Xavier. The upper section is divided by pilasters and framed on both sides with corbels and statues of saints. The top of the facade is terminated by a blown-segmented gable and the Jesuit emblem. Masucci originally planned belfries, but these were not completed, and the current campanile from the 18th Century was built on the adjacent Palazzo Marchesi. In 1943, the building was heavily damaged by bombing, then painstakingly restored. Behind the church is a Jesuit house, the Casa Professa, now housing the town library. The floor plan is in the shape of a Latin cross. The nave is 72.10 m long, 42.65 m wide and 70 m high and is decorated with polychrome marbles, stucco and frescoes. In particular, the marble reliefs with their figural and ornamental motifs on the pillars and the marble mosaics are unique. The dome was destroyed in 1943, then rebuilt with double dome and stained glass windows.

The Cathedral. (*via Vittorio Emanuele II, in front of number 476*) Palermo Cathedral is the cathedral church of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Palermo. As an architectural complex, it is characterized by the presence of different styles, due to a long history of additions, alterations and restorations, the last of which occurred in the 18th century. The church was erected in 1185 by Walter Ophamil (or Walter of the Mill), the Anglo-Norman archbishop of Palermo and King William II's minister, on the area of an earlier Byzantine

basilica. The main façade is on the Western side and has the appearance set in the 14th and 15th centuries. It is flanked by two towers and has a Gothic portal surmounted by a niche with a precious 15th century Madonna. The right side has outstretching turrets and a wide portico (the current entrance) in Gothic-Catalan style, with three arcades, erected around 1465 and opening to the square. The interior has a Latin cross plan, with a nave and two aisles divided by pilasters. In the first two chapels of the right aisle are the tomb of emperors and royal figures moved here in the 18th century from their original sites (mostly from the basilica itself). Here are the remains of Emperor Henry VI, his son Frederick II. The crypt, accessed from the left side, is an evocative room with cross vault supported by granite columns, housing tombs and sarcophagi of Roman, Byzantine and Norman ages.

Cappella Palatina. (*piazza Indipendenza, at Palazzo dei Normanni*) The Palatine Chapel (Cappella Palatina) is the royal chapel of the Norman kings of Sicily situated on the second floor at the center of the Palazzo Reale in Palermo. The chapel was commissioned by Roger II of Sicily in 1132 to be built upon an older chapel (now the crypt) constructed around 1080. It took eight years to build and many more to decorate with mosaics and fine art. The sanctuary, dedicated to Saint Peter, is reminiscent of a domed basilica. It has three apses, as is usual in Byzantine architecture, with six pointed arches (three on each side of the central nave) resting on recycled classical columns. The mosaics of the Palatine Chapel are of unparalleled elegance as concerns elongated proportions and streaming draperies of figures. The chapel combines harmoniously a variety of styles: the Norman architecture and door decor, the Arabic arches and scripts adorning the roof, the Byzantine dome and mosaics. For instance, clusters of four eight-pointed stars, typical for Muslim design, are arranged on the ceiling so as to form a Christian cross.

San Domenico. (*piazza san Domenico, 1*) Second in importance only to Palermo's Cathedral, the Chiesa di San Domenico is a church found in the Vucciria neighborhood. Originally constructed between 1458 and 1480, the church sits away from Via Roma at the back of the plaza that shares its name. With its impressive Baroque facade and its sheer size, we couldn't resist taking a peek inside. "Cavernous" is the right adjective for the San Domenico. Huge ceilings and sober stone columns mark the interior, which is spacious and unshowy; almost a relief after the Baroque indulgences of the Casa Professa and Santa Caterina. The church is full of the graves of famous Palermitani, some beautifully done, and walking through felt almost like touring a cemetery. The best part of the church, however, can best be viewed from outside in the plaza. The magnificent Baroque facade is gold and white, with twelve large columns and statues set in niches. The plaza itself could be beautiful, featuring as its centerpiece a towering column with a cloaked figure atop it, but it's found a sad new life as a hectic, honking car park. Around the corner from the church, you can find the Oratory of San Domenico. Like the other two oratories we've visited in the city, San Lorenzo and Santa Cita, this contains beautiful stucco work by the Palermitano master Giacomo Serpotta. It's not on the same scale as the other two, but is still impressive. Twelve statues of virtues like Justice and Patience, embodied as noblewomen, twelve oil paintings and twelve stucco depictions of biblical scenes are protected by about twelve-hundred playful cherubs.

San Giovanni degli Eremiti. (*via dei Benedettini, 16*) The church's origins date to the 6th century. Later, after the Islamic conquest of Sicily, it was converted into a mosque. After the establishment of the Norman domination of southern Italy, it was returned to the Christians by Roger II of Sicily who, around 1136, entrusted it to the Benedictine monks of Saint William of Vercelli. The church was extensively modified during the following centuries. A restoration held around 1880 attempted to restore its original medieval appearance. The church is notable for its brilliant red domes, which show clearly the persistence of Arab influences in Sicily at the time of its reconstruction in the 12th century, the Arab-Norman culture. In his *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily*, F. Elliot described it as "... totally oriental... it would fit well in Baghdad or Damascus". However, the red colour of the domes are not original, as they were restored in the present way at the end of the nineteenth century by an architect who found pieces of red plaster on the domes and

therefore decided to paint all the domes in red. The church lies with a flank on a square construction, which was probably a former mosque. The church is on the Latin Cross plan with a nave and two aisles and three apses. Each of the square spans is surmounted by a dome. The presbytery, ending with a niche, has also a dome. The cloister, enriched by a luxurious garden, is the best preserved part of the ancient monastery. It has notable small double columns with capitals decorated by vegetable motifs, which support ogival arches. It also includes an Arab cistern.

San Francesco d'Assisi. (*via Immacolatella*) If you compare this wonderful mediaeval church to La Magione, it becomes clear how quickly architectural styles developed and evolved in Palermo. Indeed, while La Magione incorporated and drew on Arab-Norman architectonic philosophy, the Basilica of San Francesco, started in 1255, is built in a typically Italian Romanesque Gothic Style. The façade, completed in the early 1300s, has a classic rose window and false arches but inside the mood is much more ascetic, as maybe befits a church dedicated to San Francesco. Indeed, today there is still an order of Franciscan monks that live in the adjoining monastery. The church also plays host to frequent concerts.

Historic Market

Vucciria. (*near the Post Office Central, via Roma*) The most famous Palermo market is the Vucciria market. In the local dialect, Vucciria means "voices" or "hubbub" which is certainly one way to find the market – just listen for the noise as everyone haggles back and forth! It flows through the side streets around the Piazza San Domenico.

The Vucciria market is open Monday through Saturday from around dawn until 2 pm (like most of the markets in the city). All kinds of fresh seafood, herbs, and local produce are on offer, but you'll need to go before 10 am to get the best options on those goods. Souvenirs and local handcrafts are also offered at the Vucciria market.

The center of the outdoor market is the Piazza Caracciolo, the fishermen's square. It is known also for the most famous paint of Renato Guttuso "Vucciria".

Ballarò. (*near Casa Professa*) In the Ballarò Palermo gets to combine the two Italian greats, food and clothes. Primarily a food market, the Ballarò market is a street eaters delight. It is also home to large numbers of discount clothes sellers, making vintage clothes shopping easy and finding Italian fashions cheaply possible. Look for its vendors in the streets around the Piazza Carmine.

The market is also a street eaters delight. Pane con panelle, arancine, pane cu' la mezza and sfincione are readily available. In the middle of the market, this panelle stall does a roaring trade. The panelle, which are slices of a dough made from chick peas are deep fried along with aubergine slices, and then put into the freshest panini to make a stunning roll. Pane ca' mezza is another popular snack. For this, the bread roll is filled with beef spleen and topped with grated caciocavallo cheese. Just outside the market, this sfincione cart was hoping for business. Sfincione are slices of focaccia like base topped with a mixture of tomato and herbs.

Il Capo. (*near Teatro Massimo*) Il Capo is one of Palermo's four main street markets and possibly the busiest. Its Arabic origins are evident and it is well worth a visit in the morning when the level of hustle and bustle is at its highest. It concentrates mainly on the sale of food and the fish stalls are of particular renown. It is strange to think that this market borders on the enormous Fascist era law courts, two aspects of Palermo that could hardly be more different. Wending your way through the streets, you will catch glimpses of the Cathedral. The secret in these labyrinthine alleys is to follow your nose.

Galleries and Museums

Palazzo Abatellis. (*via Alloro, 4*) Palazzo Abatellis is the palace that houses the Galleria Regionale della Sicilia - the Gallery of Art for the Sicilian region. The palace itself is archeologically interesting, but most people come here for the art. The palace, an example of Gothic-Catalan architecture, was designed in the 15th century by Matteo Carnelivari, at the time working in Palermo at the palazzo Aiutamicristo. It was the residence of Francesco Abatellis (or Patella), port master of the Kingdom of Sicily. The regional gallery is home to numerous works of fine art, many of which acquired when several religious orders were suppressed in 1866. They were previously housed in the Pinacoteca della Regia Università and, from 1866, in the Museo Nazionale of Palermo, which became a regional museum when Sicily acquired autonomous status. Bust of a Gentlewoman by Francesco Laurana. The ground floor contains 12th century wooden works, 14th and 15th century works including some by Antonello Gagini, painted miolica from the 14th-17th centuries, the 15th-century Bust of a Gentlewoman by Francesco Laurana (illustration) and painted panels of wooden ceilings. The large fresco of the Triumph of Death (most likely dating to 1445), is exhibited in the former chapel. On the first floor is the museum's most famous work, the Annunciation by Antonello da Messina (15th century), considered among Italy's best Renaissance paintings. Also present are three panels with St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great and St. Jerome also by Antonello, once part of a polyptych now destroyed. Works by foreign artists include the Malvagna triptych by Jan Gossaert and the Deposition by Jan Provost, while among the Italian ones are a Moses by Pietro Novelli.

Steri. (*piazza Marina, 61*) Building of the palace began in 1307 with the Chiaramonte family, one of the wealthiest and most powerful in the Aragonese period. It belonged to Andrea, the last descendant, who was executed on 1 June 1392 opposite the entrance to the building. After that it became known as Palazzo Steri, or lo Steri, from the term Hosterium, i.e. fortified dwelling, a feature clearly visible in its square clean-cut structure. Lo Steri thus became the palace of Martin I of Aragon and of Blanche de Navarre, and later the residence of the Spanish viceroys. In the 17th cent. it was the seat of the Tribunal of the Inquisition, a function it performed until 1782, when this lugubrious institution was abolished in Sicily. It is still possible today to see the writings, drawings, and paintings of the nameless victims who were imprisoned here after their trial - these items are to be found in what are known as the "carceri Filippine" (Philippine prisons) - a long room accessible from the inner courtyard, divided by pointed arches supported by powerful columns. The Steri still preserves its original three-floor structure, and the façade is embellished by two orders of exceptionally beautiful three-light mullioned windows. The essential lines of this particular form of Gothic architecture have earned it the specific appellation of "Chiaramontan" style, much used in that period in civil buildings in Sicily. The Great Hall, dating from the late 1300s, is famous for the beauty of its wooden ceiling, with its paintings of biblical episodes and tales of chivalry.

Modern Art Gallery. (*via Sant'Anna, 1*) The Galleria d'Arte Moderna is just the right place for tourists to get first hand insight into the rich culture and history of Italy. Stretching across three floors, the Museum stocks paintings, drawings and sculptures. The gallery is solely dedicated to contemporary modern art, and includes collections like The Great National Exhibition, which depicts the industrial development of Palermo, the The paths of the twentieth century Italian, The portrait between Neoclassicism and Romanticism and The twentieth century in Sicily. The Galleria d'Arte Moderna also organizes guided tours and has a bookshop and cafeteria within its premises.

Palazzo dei Normanni. (*piazza Indipendenza, 1*) Palazzo dei Normanni, also known as the Palazzo Reale, in Palermo in Sicily has been used as a place of governance for centuries and remains so today. In fact, it is currently the seat of Sicily's regional government. The palace stands in what is the highest point of the ancient centre of the city, just above the first Punic settlements, whose remains can still be found in the basement. The palace was built in 1130, which was the year of King Roger II's crowning. It's located inside the Norman

Palace, which is definitely one of the most famous sights in Palermo. The first building, the Qasr (in Arabic, castle or palace) is believed to have been started in the 9th century by the Emir of Palermo. Parts of this early building are still visible in the foundations and in the basements, where typical Arabian vaults are present. After the Normans conquered Sicily in 1072 (just 6 years after they conquered England) and established Palermo as the capital of the new Kingdom of Sicily, the palace was chosen as the main residence of the kings. The Norman kings transformed the former Arabian palace into a multifunctional complex with both administrative and residential aims. All the buildings were linked to each other via arcades and enclosed by gardens, designed by the best gardeners of the middle east. In 1132 King Roger II added the famous Cappella Palatina to the complex, making it the focus of the palace. During the reign of the Swabian emperors, the palace maintained its administrative functions, and was the centre of the Sicilian School of poetry, but was seldom used as permanent seat of power, especially during the reign of Frederick II. The palace contains the Cappella Palatina, by far the best example of the so-called Arab-Norman-Byzantine style that prevailed in the 12th-century Sicily. The wonderful mosaics, the wooden roof, elaborately fretted and painted, and the marble incrustation of the lower part of the walls and the floor are very fine. Of the palace itself the greater part was rebuilt and added in Catalan times, but there are some other parts of Roger's work left, specially the hall called Sala Normanna.

Teatro Massimo. (*piazza Verdi*) The Teatro Massimo Vittorio Emanuele is an opera house and opera company located on the Piazza Verdi in Palermo, Sicily. It was dedicated to King Victor Emanuel II. It is the biggest in Italy, and one of the largest of Europe (the third after the Opéra National de Paris and the K. K. Hof-Opernhaus in Vienna), renowned for its perfect acoustics. An international competition for the creation of the opera house was announced by the Palermo Council in 1864 at the instigation of the mayor, Antonio Starrabba di Rudinì. For many years there had been talk of building a big new theatre in Palermo, worthy of the second biggest city in southern Italy (after Naples) and designed to promote the image of the city following the unification of Italy in 1861. The opera house was designed and overseen by the Italian architect Giovan Battista Filippo Basile, who was well-known in Sicily for his previous cathedral restoration design in the city of Acireale, as well as garden and villa designs in the city of Palermo and Caltagirone. Following G. B. F. Basile's death in 1891, construction was then overseen by his son, Architect Ernesto Basile. The Rutelli and Machì Company, represented by Giovanni Rutelli and Alberto Machì (both founding members of the company) was contracted for the main construction of the theatre which, under Architect Giovanni Rutelli's direction, went from the foundations all the way up to the theatre's attic structures. He was also responsible for all the external decorations of the building. Rutelli initially designed a steam tower crane machine which was then successfully able to lift large stone blocks and Greek/Roman styled columns during construction of the very large theatre. Rutelli belonged to a very old and renowned Italian family, which included architects and sculptors from the old Sicilian classic and baroque school. The family included building contractors, all entrepreneurs going back to the first half of the 18th century in Palermo. Along with architect Don Mario Rutelli (Giovanni's great-grandfather), they were considered to be among the most technically and artistically specialized experts in Sicily at that time, especially because of Mario's profound knowledge and experience in Ancient Greek/Roman architecture. This style required the use of natural thick stone, all of which was part of the structural design. Some of the external decoration and one of the two very large bronze statues of lions sitting next to the theatre's monumental stairway entrance were done by Giovanni Rutelli's son, sculptor artist Sir Mario Rutelli.

The construction started on 12 January 1874 but was stopped for eight years from 1882 until 1890. Finally, on 16 May 1897, twenty-two years after the laying of the foundation stone, the third largest opera theatre, after the Palais Garnier in Paris and the K. K. Hof-Opernhaus in Vienna, was inaugurated with a performance of Verdi's Falstaff conducted by Leopoldo Mugnone.

Busts of famous composers were carved for the theatre by the Italian sculptor, Giusto Liva (born in Montebelluna, Treviso in 1847) and several of his sons.

Basile was inspired by ancient and classical Sicilian architecture and, thus, the exterior was designed in the high neoclassical style incorporating elements of the Greek temples at Selinunte and Agrigento. Realized in the late-Renaissance style, the auditorium was planned for 3,000 people, but, in its current format, it seats 1,350, with 7 tiers of boxes rising up around an inclined stage, and shaped in the typical horseshoe style.

In 1974, the house was closed to complete renovations required by updated safety regulations, but cost overruns, corruption, and political in-fighting all added to the delay and it remained closed for twenty-three years, finally re-opening on 12 May 1997, four days before its centenary. The opera season started again in 1999, although Verdi's Aida was performed in 1998 while work in progress continued.

During the restoration regular opera seasons were performed in Teatro Politeama Garibaldi, a minor building not far from Teatro Massimo. In summer a few performances, usually concerts, ballet and operetta, are held in Teatro della Verdura.

In recent years, "charges of corruption and political meddling...along with budget deficits and heavy debts" have plagued the house, but, under its part-English music director, Jan Latham Koenig, it is reported that it is once again on track.

SHOPPING

Via Libertà. Via Libertà is the most luxury shopping street in Palermo. Moving from Piazza F. Crispi towards Massimo theatre you will find Cartier, Prada, Gucci, The Bridge, etc. and cheaper shops too (Zara, H&M, etc.). Moreover: bars, restaurants, ice-cream parlours...

Via Roma. Moving from Palermo central station you can find a great variety of shops (dress and shoes mostly) and in the meantime you can appreciate several old buildings and their various architectural old style and some important churches.

WHERE TO EAT

Street food

Franco U Vastiddaro – Via Vittorio Emanuele, 102

Finger food

Ai Cuochini - Via Ruggero Settimo, 68

Restaurant & Pizza

Le Pergamene - Piazza Marina, 48

Al covo dei beati paoli - Piazza Marina, 50

Stravizi - Via Gaetano Filangeri, 22

Biondo – Via Nicolò Garzilli, 12

Cucina Papoff, Via Isidoro La Lumia 32

Tredicisette, Via Siracusa 20

Ferro – Piazza Sant'Onofrio

Frida - Piazza Sant'Onofrio, 37

Margò – Piazza Sant'Onofrio,3

I grilli, Largo Cavalieri di Malta, 11

Ciccio passami l'olio - via Castrofilippo, 4

Pizzeria Italia, via dell’Orologio, 54

Restaurant

Officina del gusto – Via Vittorio Emanuele, 316
Freschette (vegetarian) - Piazzetta Monteleone, 5
De gustibus – Vicolo Fonderia, 3/5
Obikà (Rinascente City Mall Roof), Piazza San Domenico
Gadir - Via dello Spasimo, 44
Carizzi D'Amuri - Via Lungarini, 21
Gagini - Via dei Cassari, 3
Osteria dei vespri - Piazza Croce dei Vespri, 6
Mangia e Bevi - Largo Cavalieri di Malta, 18
La casa del brodo - Via Vittorio Emanuele, 175
Ai Cascinari - Via D'Ossuna 43
Osteria Mercede - Via Pignatelli Aragona, 52
Supra i Mura - Piazza Porta Carini, 5
Bufalella - Piazzetta Bagnasco 8
Sesto Canto (Gluten free) - Via Sant'Oliva, 26
Pizzo e Pizzo - Via XII Gennaio, 1/P
La corte dei mangioni - Via Sammartino, 97

Sandwiches & “Fast Food”

Di martino - Via G.Mazzini, 54
The Navy - Via Vittorio Emanuele, 41
Kebab - Piazza Olivella’s area
Pan x focaccia - Via Isidoro La Lumia, 74

Ice cream

Ilardo - Foro Italico Umberto I, 1
Brioscià - Via Mariano Stabile, 198
Accardi - Via Gaetano Amoroso, 1
Da Ciccio - Corso dei Mille, 79

WHERE TO DRINK

Tea & chocolate + home cakes & cookies

Da Lorenzo – via IV aprile, 7
Rintocco - via Orologio, 14

Cocktail & Night drink

Ai chiavettieri - via dei chiavettieri, 18
Ai bottai – via bottai, 62
Kuè – via bottai, 6
Kursaal Kalhesa, Foro Umbero I, 21
Spillo - Cortile di San Giovanni degli Eremiti, 2
Hotel Ambasciatori Roof Bar – Via Roma, 111
Excelsior Roof of the La Feltrielli store - Via Camillo Benso Cavour, 133

