

Directions to Alcantara Gorge: Take a left at the NAS 1 gate. After about 3km, go right and take the A19 to Catania. After about 5km, take the Messina (A18) exit. Go approximately 20km and exit at Giardini Naxos. Pay the toll and stay to the right. Head inland, not toward the water. Follow the signs to Gole Dell'Alcantara. Estimated Driving Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

2. MT. ETNA

The largest active volcano in Europe is definitely a must see! It is only a short drive from the Catania area. It provides impressive views and lots of adventure for those who love the outdoors. See the many lava flows and hike the lower craters on Mt. Etna South. There are daily excursions to the top. Shopping, a hotel, and sightseeing are also available to visitors. You must have a guide to take you to the very top of the volcano.

Directions: Mt. Etna Nord. Take a left from the NAS 1 gate, and follow SS192 for about 3km. Get on the A19 (Catania-Palermo) going towards Catania. After about 5km, get on the Tangenziale heading to the A18 (Catania-Messina). Exit at Fuimefreddo, where you'll pay a toll, and follow the yellow signs for Mt. Etna. These will lead you to Piano Provenanza.

Mt. Etna Sud. Exit right from the NAS 1 gate. After 1km, turn left toward Motta St. Anastasia, following the blue or green signs to Catania. After Motta, turn left at the blue sign for Paterno and follow signs for Belpasso and Etna Sud. After the town of Belpasso, follow signs for Etna Sud and Rifugio Sapienza.

9. ERICE

Deemed somewhat of a western Taormina, Erice has maintained its medieval feel with the Pepoli and Venus castles. A lush park surrounds these castles. Other points of interest are the beautiful Mother Church on Via Carvini, and Cordici Civic Museum in Piazza Umberto.

Directions: Turn left from the NAS 1 gate. After about 3km, turn right towards the A19 headed to Palermo. Pass Palermo after approximately 2 hours. Go straight, following the signs for Trapani and the A29. After about another hour of driving, take the Valderice exits and follow the signs for Erice.

10. EGADI ISLANDS

These three islands are another of the best-kept Sicilian hotspots. They are wonderful for swimming and sunbathing. The islands can be reached by hydrofoil from Trapani. The sea is the most amazing point of interest! It is famous for tuna fishing in May (mattanza). There are also Paleolithic caves that are great for viewing. The furthest island, Marettimo, is known for its extraordinarily clear waters.



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TOP 10 SPOTS IN SICILY



1. TAORMINA

The loveliest city in Sicily and many say even the entire country of Italy. Taormina has the most wonderful view of Mt. Etna and the Mediterranean. It's a great place to spend the weekend. Or you can spend the day shopping, eating, and enjoying the surroundings. Top sights to see are: the Greek amphitheater, Castelmola, the aquarium, the Odeon, and the Cathedral. Also, a shore drive away, you can find the Alcantara Gorge, Gole Dell'Alcantara. This is a spectacular gorge that is great for picnics, hiking, or wading through the water.

Directions: From the NAS 1 gate, take a left. After about 1km, take the A19 Autostrada toward Catania. Follow the signs to Catania/Messina and exit on the A18. Take the exit for Taormina Sud (beach area) or Taormina Nord. Approximate driving time is 45 minutes to one hour. It's approximately 75km away. The A18 between Taormina and Catania is a toll road in both directions. Park below the city at the public garage (Lumbi Parcheggio) and take the free five-minute shuttle bus up into town. As is common throughout Sicily, shops are closed 1pm-3.30pm.

3. AGRIGENTO

This fantastic historical site simply must be visited during your time on Sicily. Agrigento is home to the Valley of the Temples, where some of the most well-preserved Greek temples in the world are located. The town also has some incredible churches and scenic views of the coast. Some of the nicest beaches can be found on the SS115. Be sure to see the temples, the cathedral, and the Santa Maria dei Greci church!

Directions: Exit left from the NAS 1 gate. After about 3km, go right and take the A19 Autostrada from Palermo. After about 90km, take the exit for Caltanissetta. Go straight toward Agrigento for the “Valle Dei Templi” (Valley of the Temples). After the first exit for Agrigento, follow the yellow sign for “Valle Dei Templi.” The town of Agrigento is located on the hill above the temples

4. PIAZZA ARMERINA

Nestled in the Erebit Mountains and surrounded by pine and eucalyptus trees, Piazza Armerina is a beautiful sight. The incredible mosaics in the nearby Roman Villa del Casale make this one of the foremost archeological sites in Sicily. Nearby are other wonderful archeological sites at the Greek town of Morgantina.

Directions: Take a left from the NAS 1 gate. Take the A19 Catania-Palermo towards Palermo. After about an hour (54km), take the exit for Mulinello and go right toward Valguarnera-Piazza Armerina (a narrow road). At the end of the road (about 5km), turn left. After another 500 meters, take another left heading over a bridge. Then go straight on the SS117 towards Piazza Armerina. After about 23km, you will reach

Piazza Armerina. For the Roman Villa, follow signs for Villa Romana del Casale.

5. AEOLIAN ISLANDS

The natural beauty of these seven islands creates a distinctive setting for a variety of activities. The islands pose a natural beauty enhanced by endless beaches, bays, grottos, and inlets. Geological and volcanic phenomena are abundant on all islands. There are plenty of lovely sites to go hiking, scuba diving, kayaking, paddle boarding, and snorkeling.

Directions: From NAS 1 gate, take a left. Then take a right after 1.5mi at the sign for Palermo highway. Follow the green sign for Catania, about 4mi, until you see the exit for Catania/Messina A18. This takes you to Milazzo (about 2 hours). There are secure parking garages in Milazzo where you can leave your car. It is not recommended to take your car to the islands, as they are only allowed on Lipari. Regular ferry and hydrofoil service is available from Milazzo year round. Ferries run more frequently during the summer months.

6. SIRACUSA

Siracusa was once the most powerful city in the western world. It was founded in 733 BC and has some of the most amazing archeological artifacts. The Greek influence represents only one part of Siracusa’s magnificent history. The area is alive with culture and entertainment, rich in mythology and enchantment. Seafood restaurants are plentiful and offer delicious arrays of local cuisine. For more information, visit:
www.bestofsicily.com/siracusa.htm

Directions: From the NAS 1 gate, turn left. After about 1km, catch the Autostrada A19 towards Catania. After the gas station, take the next exit for Siracusa-Ragusa. Take the exit for Siracusa (after Siracusa Nord). Driving time is approximately 1 hour.

7. PALERMO

At 2,700 years old, Palermo is perhaps the most-conquered city of Italy. It was founded by the Phoenicians but named by the ancient Greeks. Palermo became part of the Roman Republic and eventually part of the Byzantine Empire. It was later under Arab rule, which was followed by the Norman conquest. In time, it would be united with the kingdom of Naples until the Italian unification of 1960. The metropolitan area of Palermo is the fifth most populated in Italy.

Directions: Exit left out of the NAS 1 gate. After about 3km, take the A19 Autostrada towards Palermo. Stay on the A19 until you reach Palermo (180km, 2 hours).

8. CEFALU

This is certainly one of Sicily’s hidden jewels. Cefalu has captivating views with fantastic sandy beaches. Don’t miss a walk from Piazza Garibaldi along Corso Ruggiero where you can see the church of Santa Maria della Catena and the Piazza Duomo with the beautiful cathedral. Other points of interest include the nearby towns of Castelbuono, Pollina, and Geraci Siculo.