



# **SICILY**

**A LAND WHERE  
TOURISM AND TASTES  
LIVE IN HARMONY**



# Introduction

*T*alking about food in Sicily is about history. Smells, flavors and colours of traditional dishes, from street food to the menus for special occasions, it seems to go with past dominations and cultures of which the island has witnessed. Food, as you know, brings people together, and in Sicilian cuisine this union of different cultures has influenced the typical sicilian food over the years. It happens at the table so that we move from the spicy taste of Arabic dishes to countless recipes using tomatoes of the Spanish period. The Mediterranean diet, today recognized by the UNESCO as a heritage to be protected, found on the island is its perfect synthesis. Sea salt, extra virgin olive oil, local wines, hard wheat bread and pasta are combined with blue fish and seasonal vegetables. Ricotta and cheese are found even in desserts enriched with dried and glazed fruit, to become triumphs of art baking: like Cassata, Buccellati and Paste di mandorla (cakes made with almond paste) as if they were handmade lace. No less triumphant when it arrives on the table, it appears in pasta with sardines or a timbale of little pasta rings, macaroni with home mixed meat sauce, aubergines caponata with toasted almonds. And what about the cous cous with Arabic inspiration, the real one, "incocciato a mano" (which means handmade) served in Trapani with superb fish soups, or as a dessert with pistachios and raisins. Not to mention the "frutta marziorana" the artistic beauty of fruit and vegetables made from marzipan ...



Each province has its own specialties that women have been handing down over the centuries. From bread, always different in form and type, to the antipasto of fried vegetables in batter, or "focacce contadine" (a kind of flat bread), or desserts.



Everywhere, from the hills to the sea, very old olive trees grow that produce oil P.D.O. (Protected Designation of Origin) of great value.







For lovers of food there is more fun to have, to go to the markets and see, touch, and even taste, the raw materials with which they were born with the delights of the palate.







In Palermo it is worth visiting the markets Ballarò, Capo and Vucciria; Catania fish market is always a must to visit, also with its typical restaurants.





In Trapani, the area of the new fish market is full of stalls of street vendors with superb local produce, like olives, bread, pasta, cheese and products resulting from tuna.





Street food, with its intense aromas, immediately hits visitors and grabs their attention. A trick inherited from the Arabs, who consume cheap food, while standing in the street, at anytime.





Fried aubergines and thistles, "stigghiole" (lamb intestine roasted on the barbecue) and "pani ca meusa" (spleen sandwich) with or without cottage cheese or dusted with cheese, boiled octopus... and still palermitani often eat on the street even replacing the main meal.







”Pannelle” (made from chickpea flour and fried) croquettes, bread rolls with meat, Sicilian pizza and ”arancini” (a ball of fried rice with meat and peas or cheese and ham). Also available fried vegetables in batter.



The cheeses, along with wines, tells the gastronomic universe of the different areas of the island. Ricotta is the basis for cakes with cream. Its freshness and careful workmanship, are the secret of "cannoli" and "cassata".











”Provola cheese”, fresh and cured, is found from the Nebrodi mountains to the Madonie mountains; more rare is the ”piacentino ennese cheese” enriched with saffron. ”Caciocavallo cheese” it’s typical of the province of Ragusa with a strong flavor and very spicy.





At least seven wine routes identified in Sicily, which correspond to the native varieties and the dozens of C.D.O. ("Controlled designation of origin") with the protocols of production, which outline a good wine-making journey and bonding with nature.





**W**ines: Black wines from Etna, white wines from Alcamo, red wines from Riesi and Avola, "Cerasuolo wine" from Vittoria, "Passito wine" from Pantelleria, "Malvasia wine" from the Aeolian Islands, "Marsala wines" more or less aged, "Mamertino wine" from Messina... the discovery of a world that opens to connoisseurs of wine.



The trend today is geared to the recovery of grape varieties, the origin of which, takes you back to the Phoenician domination on the island.





**E**ven in Sicily the small army of wine tourists are increasing, attracted by the beauty of the agricultural landscape, the wineries and the quality of the vines that are still not very industrialized.









**S**icilian cuisine is a fusion of simple dishes and delicacies from the kitchen of the eighteenth century in the houses of the Lords.

When it comes to fish, the reference is always to the tradition of seaside villages. Always present is blue fish, for example the well-known pasta with sardines and wild fennel, stuffed sardines, anchovies in oil and grilled mackerel.





The "mascolino", from the family of anchovies, in Catania is served in soup or fried. For spaghetti, they resort to the strong flavors of freshly caught sea urchins, black squid or roe tuna.





Sorbets, from the Arabic "sherbeth" and ice cream, of ancient origin, prepared with snow from Etna for the tables of the Lords, they were made of ice, water and fruit. From this comes the slush, specialties of eastern Sicily prepared with citrus fruits, other fruits harvested, processed and transformed into fancy desserts, jellies and fragrant desserts.



The "granite" (slushes) should be enjoyed together with whipped cream, accompanied by freshly baked "brioche" (a soft white bread). An unusual way to have breakfast, although very caloric. And yet, in the hot summer evenings, a refreshing "pezzo" (a slice of ice cream cake) to be savored in the flavours of fruit.





Countless sicilian products are now becoming the principals of Slow Food, sought after by chefs: the large broad bean from Leonforte, lentils from Ustica, pistachios from Bronte, salami from Nebrodi, onions from Giarratana, red garlic from Nubia, olives and bread from Castelvetro, almonds from Avola, the salt from the salt plains of Trapani and Marsala, "caciocavallo cheese" from Ragusa, "vastedda" (a type of cheese) from Belice and exceptional chocolate from Modica.





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