Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Erasmus+ Ka229 Project: L.A.T.I.N.S.
Languages Among Teenagers Involved in Nature and Society
2019-1-RO01-KA229-063495

Meeting Palermo 02-06 May 2022

Palermo Guidebook



WELCOME TO PALERMO

Palermo, with a population of about 700,000, is the one of the largest cities in Italy and it is located in a wonderful position in the centre of a bay enclosed by the imposing headland of Monte Pellegrino to the north and Capo Zafferano to the south. Behind it lies a small plain known as *Conca d'Oro* (Golden Basin) because of the fertility of its land where citrus and olive groves thrive.

An important feature of the layout of the city's historic centre is the intersection of Corso Vittorio Emanuele and via Maqueda, determining the central point of the old town called "*Quattro Canti*" (Four Corners) and division of the city in four districts, called *mandamenti*.

History in brief

Panormus (the ancient greek name meaning *all harbour*) was founded by Phoenicians in the 7BC and in 245 BC it was conquered by the Romans. Certainly its golden age started under the Arab heel when *Balarm* became one of the main Islamic centres in the West. As the city expanded, new district grew up such as the Kalsa, a fortified quarter on the sea and the emir's residence. In 1072 the city fell into the hands of the **Normans** under Count Roger de Hauteville, who, however, allowed population in general to continue to freely practice their occupations.

sailing and fishing boats. Moreover you could enjoy the view drinking something in some bars/restaurants on hand: the "Calamida", "A' Cala" and the architectural seafront installation Nautiscopio.

Almost in front of "La Cala", along corso Vittorio Emanuele, precisely in Via Chiavettieri, near the Vucciria Market, we invite you to explore other cafés and bars, where young people usually go during the weekend for live music and pastime.

We are pleased to welcome you!

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Nightlife

Having a night out in Palermo means different things to different visitors. Fortunately, Palermo nightlife presents you with a number of options for evening entertainments. Do remember that the usual Italian dinner hour is 8 pm, so most of the spontaneous nightlife in the city does not get underway until 10 pm or later.

Notwithstanding many bars or disco in the city centre or in outlying parts, people living in Palermo usually prefer to stay out of bars having a drink or simply a walk.

So we could suggest an after dinner walk in Via Ruggero Settimo from via Libertà to Piazza Verdi (in front of the Teatro Massimo) passing through Piazza Politeama. Once enjoying the wonderful architecture of the two theatres we suggest you to go to via dell'Orologio, where there are some bars and restaurants, and to Piazza dell'Olivella, a little square reachable from via dell'Orologio and situated in front of the Church Sant'Ignazio dell'Olivella. Next to Piazza dell'Olivella there is an area well known as Champagneria for the name of one the first bars that has opened there since a while.

Alternatively you should have another walk from Cattedrale, in Corso Vittorio Emanuele, to the ancient harbour called "La Cala" passing through Piazza Marina and Porta Felice. Here you can appreciate the gentle breeze from the sea and the wonderful sight of

This led to the development of the Arab-Norman style in art and architecture. In 1212 Palermo and Sicily were taken over by **Frederick II of Swabia (Stupor Mundi),** son of emperor Henry VI of the Hohenstaufen dynasty and Queen Constance of Sicily of the Hauteville dynasty. His Sicilian royal court saw the first use of a literary form of an Italo-Romance language, Sicilian, and for this reason he played a vital role in promoting literature through the Sicilian School of poetry.

The Swabians were then followed by the **french Angevins**, who were expelled during the popular uprising "War of the Vespers" (1282–1302) and subsequently by the **Aragonese**, which meant the beginning of five centuries of Spanish domination. In 1815 the Congress of Vienna united the crowns of Naples and Palermo, thus establishing the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies under the Bourbons, which lasted until 1860, when Garibaldi began unification of Italy landing at Marsala and Sicily was annexed to the newly founded Kingdom of Italy.

A leap forward of nearly a 100 years brings us to the second world war, when Palermo was heavily bombed and its historic centre seriously damaged. After the end of the war, in 1946, a royal decree approved the statute of the Sicilian Region, which conferred autonomous government on the island, one of the five Italian "regions of special statute".

A focus on the Unesco Arab-Norman Heritage sites

"The monumental complex included in the site of "Arab-Norman Palermo and the Cathedral Churches of Cefalù and Monreale" represents a material example of coexistence, interaction and interchange of different cultural components of heterogeneous historical and geographic origin. Such syncretism has produced an original, architectural and artistic style of outstanding universal value, in which **Byzantine, Islamic and Latin elements** are fused, able each time to produce itself in unique combinations of sublime artistic value and extraordinary unity. The Arab-Norman syncrestism had a strong impact on the Middle Ages, contributing meaningfully to the formation of a Mediterranean Koinè, a condition that was fundamental to the development of the modern Mediterranean-European civilization."

PALERMO ARABO-NORMANNA
E LE CATTEDRALI DI CEFALÙ
E MONREALE

UNESCO
Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite per l'Educazione, la Scienza e la Cultura

- **Capo Market** is a lively street market with a souk-like feeling, paying homage to its Arabic roots. Most people like to visit it for a good bargain and to experience the longstanding traditions of Palermo.

The markets are open from 7am, usually the busiest part of the day to visit, until later in the evening.



PALERMO FOOD MARKETS

The street markets of Palermo are a must. Italian markets, especially Sicilian ones, are a real cultural experience. Filled with colorful and fresh products, and a lot of loud vendors, this is the place where you can feel what it is like to be local. Even though you can find them everywhere, here is a list of the biggest and most popular ones:



- **Ballarò Market** is the oldest and the largest of all street markets, filled with fresh products, fruits, vegetables and amazing street food.

- **La Vucciria Market** isn't what it used to be, looking more like a flea market nowadays than the historic food market that it used to be. But when the sun goes down life pours into the streets of Mercato della Vucciria. Filling the streets are young people looking for entertainment, drinks and amazing street food until the early hours of the morning.

Arab-Norman Palermo *includes a series of nine civil and religious structures dating from the era of the Norman kingdom of Sicily (1130-1194): two palaces, three churches, a cathedral, a bridge, as well as the cathedrals of Cefalú and Monreale.*

THE ROYAL PALACE AND PALATINE CHAPEL

It is likely that both the Phoenicians and the Romans built a fortress to dominate the entire city area on the hill where the palace is today. Nothing remains of these early buildings. After the Arabs, thanks to the Normans the building became a splendid Palace trough restoration and transformation. The heart of it was a very spacious aula regia, also known as aula verde, where the king had meetings and banquets. The apartments, toilets, and staff quarters were located in different wings, connected by terraces, balconies and gardens rich in green and water basins with an Arabian flair. The building still contains at least two Arab-Norman jewels of extraordinary beauty: the Sala di Ruggero and the **Palatine Chapel.**



© CRICD





Started in 1130, the year of the coronation of Ruggero II, the first king of Sicily, **the Palatine Chapel** has been completed in 13 years and consacrated ,according to an inscription in the dome, in 1143. Its mosaics are the finest production of Byzantine art and the Islamic tradition is finally represented by the wooden ceiling of "muqarnas" (stalactites).

© CRICD



PALERMO CATHEDRAL It is located in the oldest sacred area of Palermo, where the Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantines and Arabs had raised their house of worship. When the Normans took the power, they immediately replaced the Muslim mosque with a Christian church. Over the following centuries, the original building was modified with additions and renovations. The union of a picturesque mix of styles, gave life to a great and, on the whole, quite harmonious ensemble. Inside there are royal and imperial tombs. Roger II, Henry VI of Swabia, Constance of Hauteville and Frederick II of Swabia rest here, among others.

However, it's actually the sweets department that differentiates Palermo's cuisine from other types, especially sweets made with ricotta like **Cannoli** or **Cassata Siciliana**. Just as tasty are the sweets made with almonds, like the delicious "**frutta di martorana**" or "**parfait di mandorle**," served with a drop of hot chocolate, or even the **torta setteveli**, six layers of chocolate spread over seven wafer like biscuits.

In addition to these specialties, it's still a great spot to get classic quick Italian foods like coffee, granita, pasta, pizza, icecream, cookies and others.







Palermo: The capital of street food





Palermo is one of the World's top 10 cities for "Street food". Of the city's fried delicacies, we recommend **arancini** (fried rice balls stuffed with meat sauce and cheese), **crocchè** (Fried potato balls), **panelle** (friend chick peas pancake), and **cardoni** (fried cardoon), with panelle and cardoni as her favorites for their sour aftertaste.

A typical Palermitano snack is **panino con la milza**, or spleen sandwiches, available plain or "maritata" meaning with cheese, together with the Pieces Rotisserie Sicilian ("**Rosticceria"**), varied and numerous, *sweet* and savory, fried or baked. And whatsmore, **sfincione** (typical sicilian tasty pizza made with sauce, cheese, olive oil and anchovies), **anelletti al forno con ragu'** (baked pasta with meat sauce) and **caponata** (cooked salad made with eggplants, capers, tomato sauce and olives).





THE CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA DELL'AMMIRAGLIO

It was completed in 1143 thanks to a generous donation of the admiral Giorgio d'Antiochia. An Arab traveller, Ibn Jubair, who visited the church in 1184, defined it as "the most beautiful work in the world" and today it is still one of the most beautiful religious buildings in Palermo, with its valuable mosaics but also finest example of Baroque in Sicily.

THE CHURCH OF SAN CATALDO It stands next to the Martorana church, built in 1160 during the Norman period. It preserves the original forms with the three red domes of Arabic inspiration. The interior is very impressive, although it is not covered with mosaics. It is austere, making clear in this way the rectangular structure divided into three naves of six columns, with various capitals. The mosaic on the floor is the original one.



THE CHURCH OF SAN GIOVANNI DEGLI EREMITI was founded by Ruggero II in 1142. During the most splendid years of the Norman domination, the annexed monastery was the richest and most privileged Sicilian convent, surrounded by greenery and colours of citrus trees, agaves, bougainvillea, roses, pomegranates and tall flowering shrubs. The five red domes are a very important element of several Arab-Norman buildings.

PALAZZO DELLA ZISA The construction of this **sollatium** (place of pleasure) was undertaken in the last years of the life of William I and completed by his son William II. It can be dated between 1165 and 1167. The name comes from the Arabic *Al-Aziz,* which means "beautiful". It is provided with a ventilation and refrigeration system of the rooms, particularly in the so-called Fountain Room, decorated with mosaics. Today the castle has been turned into a Museum of Islam and it has interesting examples of the Arab world in Sicily.

THE ADMIRAL'S BRIDGE was built the in 1131 to connect the city to the gardens beyond the Oreto river.. Its structure consists of very pointed arches; the river was diverted and now a garden grows under the bridge.



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MONREAL CATHEDRAL

William the Good, King of Sicily, built the Cathedral in a short time between 1174 and 1176. The interior of the cathedral still has the appearance it had in the twelfth century. It has a basilica-type layout with a large surface area: 102 m long by 40 wide. The walls are almost entirely covered with gilded mosaics totalling 6,340 sqm. The Benedictine cloister, also dating from the time of William II, was part of a Benedictine abbey adjacent to the cathedral.

If you plan on using the bus as your main choice of transport, the best thing to do is buy multi-day tickets. A two-day ticket will cost you around €6 and a three-day ticket around €8.

Bus-routes to some interesting points in the city :

- **Bus route 100** takes you from Central Station to Stadio delle Palme and Stadio Renzo Barbera (Stadio La Favorita).
- **Route 102** takes you from Central Station to Notarbartolo Station, the second biggest train station in Palermo
- **Route 104** goes from Piazza Indipendenza (Norman Palace) to the English Gardens (Giardino Inglese).
- **Route 806** departs from Piazza Francesco Crispi (located next to Giardino Inglese) and takes you to Piazza Mondello located right on the banks of **Mondello Beach**.

Useful phone number

CARABINIERI: 112

EMERGENCY (POLICE): 113

FIREMEN: 115

HEALTH EMERGENCY: 118

FIRE EMERGENCY: 1515

GETTING AROUND PALERMO

AIRPORT: Palermo "Falcone Borsellino" International Airport is located 35 km from Palermo. It's well connected with local transports to reach the city of Palermo and the central train station (by taxi, by bus, by train, by car-rental)

STAZIONE CENTRALE (MAIN STATION), located in Piazza Giulio Cesare , is the main railway station in Palermo, less than 2km south from the city centre and it provides connection to other Sicilian and Italian cities.

Public Transport

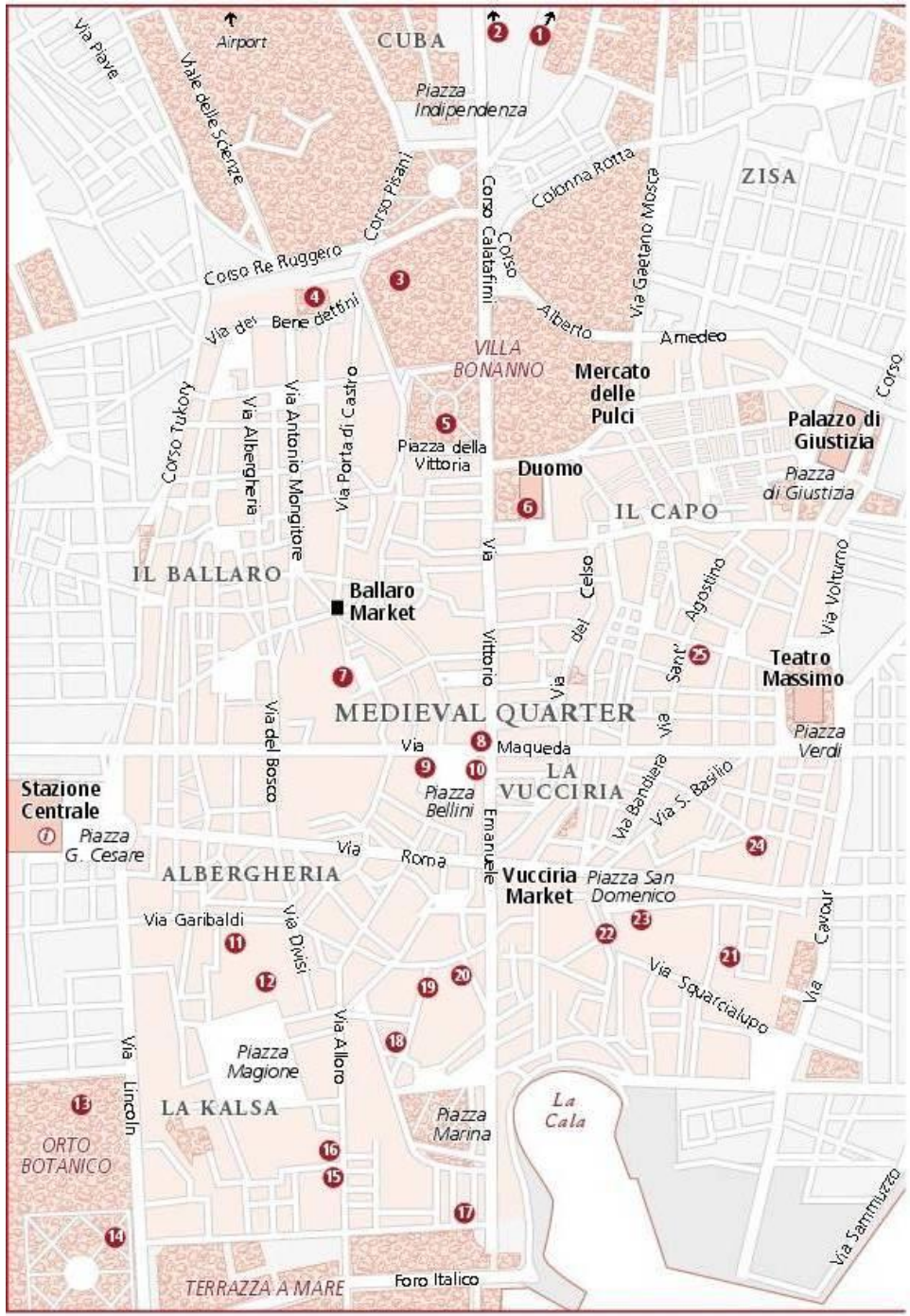
One of the easiest ways of getting around are ***local buses***. A local company called AMAT operates the public buses. You can buy the tickets for the local buses in almost every tobacco or newspaper store. They are valid for 90' from the moment that you validate them.

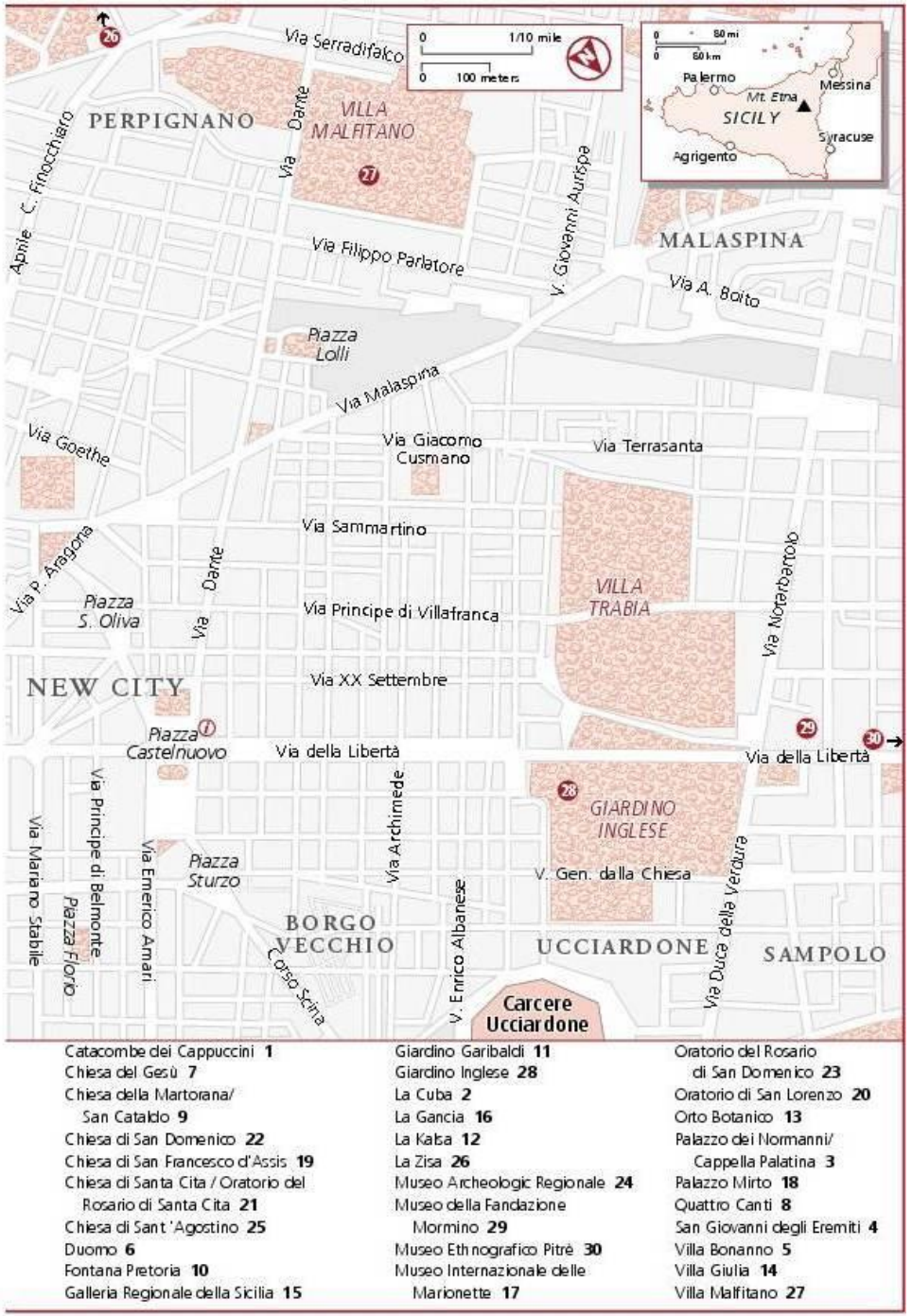
NOTE: Tickets bought in shops cost a little less (around €1,40) because when you buy tickets on the bus they charge you a "collection on board fee" which is around € 0,40. The price for a daily ticket is around €3.50 and is valid on the day of validation.

The little arcades delimiting the rich little garden are supported by 228 columns combined, all richly decorated and with capitals inlaid with plant, animal and fictional motifs.

CEFALÙ CATHEDRAL was founded in 1130 by Ruggero II who according to the legend promised to build it if he survived a terrible storm that hit his ship while travelling to Palermo. The façade is strongly defined by the two angular towers, completed in 1240, the massive size of which is lightened by single and double windows. In 1472 an airy portico with triple arches was added. The interior has three naves, articulated in two rows of marble columns on which seven arches rest. The ceiling of the central nave is in painted wood and is an important example of the Islamic art in Sicily. The apse, the cross vault and the adjacent walls are decorated with mosaics that are part of a magnificent Christ Pantocrator, a perfect example of pure Byzantine style and workmanship.







Catacombe dei Cappuccini **1**
Chiesa del Gesù **7**
Chiesa della Martorana/ San Cataldo **9**
Chiesa di San Domenico **22**
Chiesa di San Francesco d'Assis **19**
Chiesa di Santa Cita / Oratorio del Rosario di Santa Cita **21**
Chiesa di Sant 'Agostino **25**
Duomo **6**
Fontana Pretoria **10**
Galleria Regionale della Sicilia **15**
Giardino Garibaldi **11**
Giardino Inglese **28**
La Cuba **2**
La Gancia **16**
La Kalsa **12**
La Zisa **26**
Museo Archeologic Regionale **24**
Museo della Fandazione Mormino **29**
Museo Ethnografico Pitrè **30**
Museo Internazionale delle Marionette **17**
Oratorio del Rosario di San Domenico **23**
Oratorio di San Lorenzo **20**
Orto Botanico **13**
Palazzo dei Normanni/ Cappella Palatina **3**
Palazzo Mirto **18**
Quattro Canti **8**
San Giovanni degli Eremiti **4**
Villa Bonanno **5**
Villa Giulia **14**
Villa Malfitano **27**