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English guide

ITINERARY · MARZAMEMI

Marzamemi in half a day: square, tuna fishery, small ports and beach

ight walking stops in the village of **Marzamemi**, born around its **tuna fishery**: from **Piazza Regina Margherita** to the **two churches**, from the **loggia degli Scieri** to the **small ports**, up to the beach of **Spinazza**. For each stop, find what to see and a practical tip.

DURATION
Half a day
3-4 hours with breaks

STOPS
8 stops
about 1.5 km

GETTING AROUND
On foot.
The village is small and the stops are just a few minutes apart.

ONLINE VERSION WITH MAP
www.marzamemi.com/itinerari/marzamemi-in-mezza-giornata

STOP 1 OF 8

Piazza Regina Margherita and the fishermen's houses

Recommended time: 25 minutes

Piazza Regina Margherita in Marzamemi with the fishermen's houses

You start from **Piazza Regina Margherita**, the heart of **Marzamemi** and the image you find in almost all the photos of the village. The first stops are all just a few steps apart, but there is much to see.

Around the square are **low houses**, where the fishermen's families lived: they were restored in **1752**, along with the palace, and one of them still has the date carved above the door. The square is also known as **«piazza delle due chiese»**, because two churches face each other from opposite sides.

The village was born with the **tuna fishery**: according to tradition founded in the Arab era, around the year 1000, in **1630** it passed to the princes of **Villadorata**.

> **A TIP**
> In summer the square fills with tables: **come early in the morning or in the late afternoon** to walk around calmly. There are parking spaces a few hundred metres away.

STOP 2 OF 8

The two churches of the square

Recommended time: 20 minutes

The façade of the church of San Francesco di Paola in Piazza Regina Margherita in Marzamemi

The new church is **San Francesco di Paola**, the **patron saint** of the village: built between **1945 and 1950** in sandstone, it has a gabled façade with a large rose window and a single nave interior with a Gothic vault. Every year, **the Monday after Ferragosto**, the statue of the saint goes in procession, even at sea on a decorated fishing boat.

On the opposite side is the **chiesa della Tonnara**, the ancient San Francesco di Paola, also known as the church of the Madonna del Carmelo: it dates back to **1752** and is connected by an **arch** to the entrance of the square. Today it is **desecrated and closed**, but the simple façade, with the sail bell tower, is clearly visible from outside.

A TIP

Look at **the two façades one after the other**: the old and the new tell two eras of the village. The church of the Tonnara is not open for visits.

STOP 3 OF 8

The Palace of the Princes of Villadorata

Recommended time: 20 minutes

The façade of the Bishop's Palace with the portal and the coat of arms, in Marzamemi

On the west side of the square stands the **Palazzo dei Principi di Villadorata**, built in **1752** in sandstone: a sober example of **Sicilian Baroque**, with a large arched portal and, above, the **coat of arms** of the family. Look at the **stone gutters** with **human faces**.

It was the summer residence of the Nicolaci, princes of Villadorata, and from here they oversaw **the trades related to fishing and tuna processing**. Today its somewhat worn appearance makes it even more evocative, and the inner courtyard is used for **events and ceremonies**.

A TIP

The palace is mainly viewed **from outside**: the interior is only opened for events or visits, so **check** if there's anything scheduled.

STOP 4 OF 8

The old tuna fishery and the loggia degli Scieri

Recommended time: 30 minutes

The loggia of the Scieri with the tuff arches and the sea, in the Tonnara of Marzamemi

Behind the palace, you enter the **old tuna fishery of Marzamemi**, one of the oldest in Sicily. It has changed shape several times and had its great development in the mid-**1700s**; the mattanza and tuna processing continued **until after the Second World War**, and today the tuna fishery **is no longer in operation**.

The ancient boat sheds have become the **loggia degli Scieri**, a single large hall of over **700 square metres**, marked by **tuff arches** and open directly to the sea. The scieri were the large boats used for tuna fishing, which descended into the water from here.

> **A TIP**
> Access depends on **events and organised visits**: check in advance, as the loggia is one of the most beautiful views of the village.

STOP 5 OF 8

La Balata, the second small port

Recommended time: 20 minutes

The Balata di Marzamemi with the small harbour and the buildings that surround it

Just outside the square is the **Balata**, the **second small port** of the village: the name comes from Arabic and recalls the **stone slabs** of the old pavement. On its edge stand two large buildings, the **Vecchia Fabbrica**, once an ice factory, and the **Casa Cappuccio**.

In summer, the Balata comes alive: in **July** it hosts the **Festival del Cinema di Frontiera**.

A TIP

If you come in July, **check the festival programme**: the Balata changes completely from day to night.

STOP 6 OF 8

The San Francesco di Paola pier

Recommended time: 15 minutes

The San Francesco di Paola quay with fishing boats in Marzamemi

The **molo San Francesco di Paola**, dedicated to the patron saint, has been **recently redeveloped** with a pavement of **Comiso stone** and **lava stone** that extends towards the sea, like a small walkway.

On the sides are the **fishing boats**, which still go out every day, with coiled ropes and spread nets. From the end, you can see the square and the village from the outside.

> **A TIP**
> Go **all the way to the end**: it's the best spot to photograph the village with the boats in the foreground.

STOP 7 OF 8

The Vicolo delle Sirene

Recommended time: 10 minutes

The mural of the sirens with red hair in the Vicolo delle Sirene in Marzamemi

Returning to the square, before reaching the sea, take the **Vicolo delle Sirene**: it's one of the **most photographed** places in Marzamemi, along with the square. The name comes from the large **mural** that decorates an entire wall: the **sirens** have fair skin and **fire-red** hair, and seem to come to life on the wall.

The houses of the village are decorated in different ways and often adorned with **plants and flowers**: a short stop, but among the most photographed.

> **A TIP**
> The alley is **narrow and very photographed**: take your time and leave space for those passing by.

STOP 8 OF 8

Spinazza Coast

Recommended time: 60 minutes

The sandy beach of the Spinazza Coast near Marzamemi

Finish your tour at **Spinazza Coast**, the **closest beach to the village**, just a few hundred metres from the square: sand, clear water, and a stretch that is mostly **free**, with some equipped establishments and refreshment points.

In summer, it is very popular, especially **in the late afternoon**, before people return to the village for dinner.

> **A TIP**
> If you want a quieter spot, **go early in the morning** or outside of the weekend.

Frequently asked questions

How much time is needed to see Marzamemi?

The village can be explored in **one or two hours**. With the beach, some breaks and a stop for a meal, it takes about **half a day**; if you also add Vendicari, it takes **a full day**.

How do you get to Marzamemi?

The most practical way is by **car**: from Noto, take the road to Pachino and follow the signs to Marzamemi. There are also buses to **Pachino**, but from there to the village you need additional connections: check the schedules.

What events are there in summer?

On the **Monday after Ferragosto**, the patron saint **San Francesco di Paola** is celebrated with a procession that even reaches the sea, and the patron saint is loaded and transported with the fishermen's boats.
In **September**, there is the **Frontier Film Festival** in Piazza Regina Margherita. In the first days of October, the **Marzamemi Book Fest** takes place, a literary festival dedicated to books, writers, meetings, and ideas.

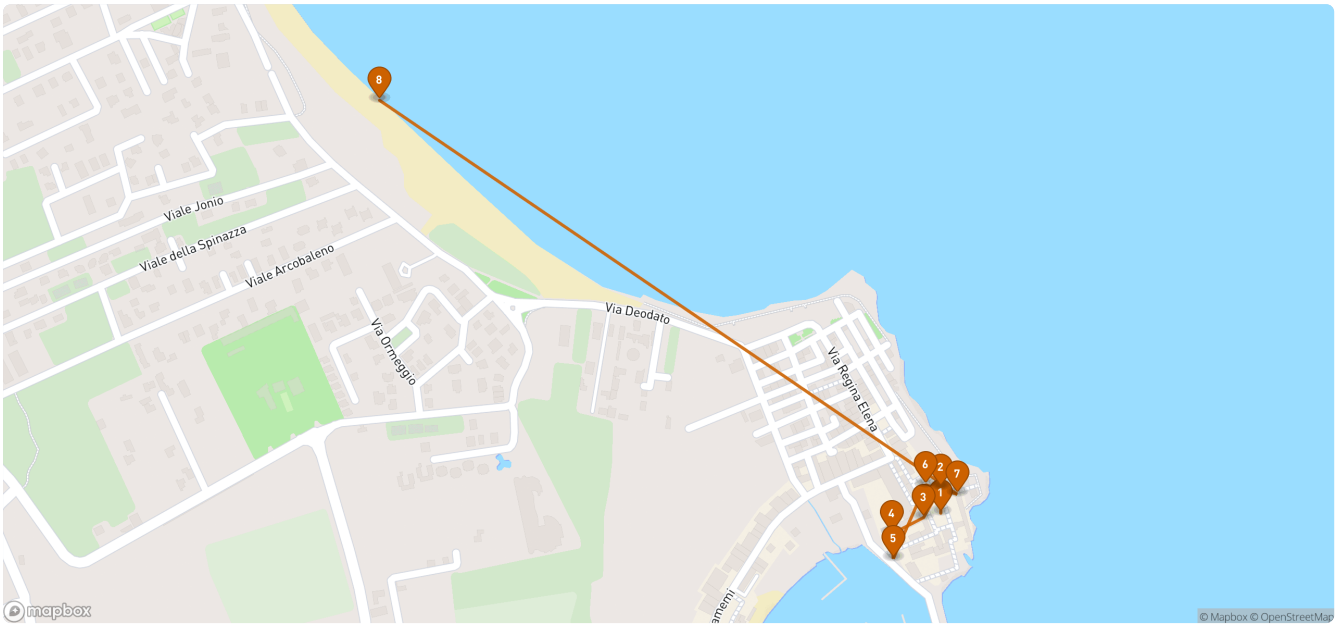
Where to eat and shop in Marzamemi?

Restaurants, bars and shops are found along the **streets of the historic centre** and **on the seafront** of the Borgo.

What to see in the surroundings?

Near Marzamemi, there are the **Riserva di Vendicari**, the **Isola delle Correnti** and the village of **Portopalo**: Vendicari and the Isola delle Correnti have a separate itinerary. Further away, **Noto**.

Route map



The numbers follow the order of the stops. The map shows no commercial businesses.

Practical information

DURATION
Half a day (3-4 hours with breaks)

GETTING AROUND
On foot. The village is small and the stops are just a few minutes apart.

BEST TIME
All year round. In summer the square is crowded: better **in the morning** or **late afternoon**.

TOTAL WALKING
about 1.5 km

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