

ITINERARY • MARZAMEMI

Eastern Sicily in 7 Days: from Catania and Etna to the Baroque of the South-East

A week by car in **Eastern Sicily: Catania, Etna, and Taormina**, then the **Val di Noto** with **Ragusa Ibla, Modica, Ortigia, Vendicari, Marzamemi, Siracusa, and Noto**. For each day, find what to see and a practical tip.

DURATION**7 days****STOPS****7 stops**

about 333.4 km

GETTING AROUND

By car: renting one is the most convenient choice, as many stops are poorly connected by public transport.

The cities are best explored on foot.

ONLINE VERSION WITH MAPwww.marzamemi.com/itinerari/sicilia-orientale-in-7-giorni

STOP 1 OF 7

Day 1 · Catania, the city of the volcano

🕒 Recommended time: One day



Piazza del Duomo in Catania with the Elephant Fountain and the Cathedral of Sant'Agata

The first day is for **Catania**, the largest city in Eastern Sicily. It's easy to get around **on foot**, but there are so many things to see that you'll hardly manage to see them all in one day: you'll be here for the first three nights, and you can finish your visit in the evening.

Many attractions are along **via Etnea**, which runs through the centre. In **Piazza del Duomo**, you'll find the Cathedral of **Sant'Agata**, the **Badia di Sant'Agata** (it's worth climbing to the dome for the view), the **Elephant Fountain**, and the **Amenano** fountain.

Enter the **Roman Theatre** and the **Odeon**, then head to **Castello Ursino** and **Porta Garibaldi**. If you can, book a guided tour of the large **Monastery of San Nicolò l'Arena**, and conclude with a stroll in the **Giardino Bellini**.

A TIP

Catania comes alive **at sunset**, when people fill the streets and squares: leave the evening free to stroll leisurely and dine in the centre.

STOP 2 OF 7

Day 2 • Etna and Aci Castello

🕒 Recommended time: One day



The Silvestri craters on the southern slope of Etna with the lava landscape

Today, you'll rise early to ascend **Etna**, the highest active volcano in Europe. From the south side, you can reach the **Rifugio Sapienza** by car in about **an hour**, at around **1,900 metres**. There are also buses from Catania, often needing to be **booked the day before**.

From the refuge, a short circular path leads around the **Silvestri Craters**, formed in **1892** and now extinct, suitable even for those who don't walk much. From here, you can take the **cable car** up to about **2,500 metres** and continue on foot along the marked trails. Higher up, to the **summit craters**, you can go **only with authorised alpine or volcanological guides**.

Etna is constantly changing: during active periods, some areas are closed. If the volcano is not accessible, an alternative is the **Alcantara Gorges Park**, where lava met the river water.

On the way back, stop at **Aci Castello**, a small village with a **castle on a rocky spur** in front of the main square. In about twenty minutes on foot along the sea, you'll reach **Aci Trezza**, with its famous **faraglioni**.

A TIP

Check each morning the current ordinance and bulletins on the volcano's activity: the night before, choose your plan, and if clouds close in at altitude, **descend**. Bring hiking shoes, sunglasses, and layered clothing.

STOP 3 OF 7

Day 3 • Taormina and Acireale

🕒 Recommended time: One day



The ancient theatre of Taormina with Etna in the background and the sea

Set your alarm early to arrive in **Taormina** before the tourist buses. Along **Corso Umberto**, the main street, you'll find most of the attractions: **Porta Catania**, the **Duomo**, the **Clock Tower**, **Piazza IX Aprile**, and the **Palazzo Corvaja**.

Don't miss the **Ancient Theatre**, with a panoramic position over the coast and Etna, a testament to the Greek and Roman era. If you still have energy, climb to the sanctuary of the **Madonna della Rocca** for a view over the town. Then head down to **Isola Bella**, for a visit or a swim.

In the mid-afternoon, head back towards Catania and stop at **Acireale**, a baroque city with **Piazza Duomo** and many churches. Take a stroll in **Villa Belvedere**, with views over the **Timpa**, the sheer coastal cliffs, and finish at the village of **Santa Maria la Scala**, where boats return at sunset.

A TIP

Taormina is **very crowded**: come **early in the morning** or in the late afternoon, and wear comfortable shoes for the climbs.

STOP 4 OF 7

Day 4 • Ragusa Ibla and Modica

🕒 Recommended time: One day



Ragusa Ibla seen from above with the Cathedral of San Giorgio and the roofs of the baroque city

Today, you enter the **Val di Noto**, where after the earthquake of **1693**, the cities were rebuilt in **baroque** style and are now a **UNESCO** heritage site. Set off early: it takes about **an hour and a half** from Catania. From tonight, it's advisable to stay in the **South-East**, for example in **Marzamemi** or **Ragusa Ibla**.

Ragusa has two centres on two hills: **Ragusa Ibla**, the old town, and **Ragusa Superiore**, the new one. Start from the Cathedral of **San Giovanni Battista**, descend to the Church of **Santa Maria alle Scale** and **Palazzo Cosentini**, and climb back up to Ibla: **Piazza Duomo** with the **Duomo di San Giorgio**, the **Circolo di Conversazione**, and the **Giardino Ibleo**.

In the afternoon, visit **Modica**, famous for its **chocolate**, with **two duomos**: **San Pietro** below and **San Giorgio** at the top of a staircase. Don't miss the rock church of **San Nicolò Inferiore**, the **Castle of the Counts**, and the viewpoints.

A TIP

On this site, you'll find two dedicated itineraries: «**Ragusa Ibla in half a day**» and «**Modica in one day**». With just one day, choose the main points: **Ragusa in the morning**, **Modica in the afternoon**.

STOP 5 OF 7

Day 5 • Ortigia

🕒 Recommended time: One day



The Maniace Castle at the tip of the island of Ortigia, overlooking the sea

The fifth day is all for **Ortigia**, the historic centre of Siracusa, connected to the city by two bridges. Slow down: the island is small but has so much to see, and in summer you can also take a dip in one of its little beaches.

At the entrance, you are welcomed by the remains of the **Temple of Apollo**, then the **Fountain of Diana** in Piazza Archimede and **Piazza Duomo**, where the **Cathedral** hides a **Greek temple dedicated to Athena**. Don't miss the **Vermexio Palace**, with the lizard carved on the corner.

Stroll along the **Foro Vittorio Emanuele II**, the **Fonte Aretusa** with the papyrus, the **Castello Maniace**, the **Giudecca** and the **Forte Vigliena**.

A TIP

On this site, there's the itinerary «**Ortigia in a day**». If you are driving, **park in Siracusa** and walk: there is a ZTL in Ortigia.

STOP 6 OF 7

Day 6 • The Vendicari Reserve and Marzamemi

🕒 Recommended time: A day



The Tonnara of Vendicari with the chimney and the tower by the sea

Today is a day almost entirely of **nature**. The **Vendicari Reserve** is ideal for combining landscape and beach: you park outside the entrance and continue on foot through the **marshes**, the ponds parallel to the coast, until you reach the **tonnara** (with the chimney), the **Torre Sveva** from the 15th century and the beaches, including **Calamosche**.

Set aside **a couple of hours in the late afternoon** for **Marzamemi**, half an hour by car: an ancient fishing village that developed around a **large square**, with the tonnara, the palace of the princes of Villadorata, the two churches and the little harbours.

A TIP

On this site, you can find the itineraries «**Vendicari in a day**» and «**Marzamemi in half a day**». If you have little time the next day, **bring forward Siracusa** to today or tomorrow.

STOP 7 OF 7

Day 7 • Siracusa and Noto

🕒 Recommended time: A day



The Cathedral of San Nicolò at the top of the staircase, with the square and the sky

The last day combines **Siracusa** and **Noto**, both UNESCO heritage sites. In Siracusa, outside Ortigia, two must-see stops: the guided tour of **San Giovanni alle Catacombe**, with the crypt of **San Marciano** and the **catacombs**, and the **Archaeological Park of Neapolis**, with the **Greek theatre**, the **Roman amphitheatre**, the **Ear of Dionysius** and the large **altar of Hiero II**.

Then **Noto**, the “capital of Baroque”, with almost everything along **Corso Vittorio Emanuele**: the church of **San Domenico**, the **Tina Di Lorenzo Theatre**, **San Carlo**, the **Cathedral** at the top of the staircase and **Palazzo Ducezio**. Finish with the **Palazzo Nicolaci di Villadorata**, with the decorated ballroom, and the **Porta Reale**.

A TIP

On this site, there are the itineraries «**Siracusa in a day**» and «**Noto in a day**». Split the day: **Siracusa in the morning**, **Noto in the afternoon**.

Frequently asked questions

How many days are needed for Eastern Sicily?

With **seven days** you see the most famous places. With **ten** you can move around with less haste and reach as far as **Agrigento**, with the Valley of the Temples and the Scala dei Turchi.

Is a car necessary?

Yes, it is the most convenient choice: many stops, especially in the South-East, are poorly connected by public transport. The cities are visited on foot, so it's best to leave the car in a parking area in the centre.

Where is it best to stay?

One idea is **three nights in Catania** (days 1-3) and the others **in the South-East**, for example in **Marzamemi** or **Ragusa Ibla**, close to the stops of days 4-7. At the bottom of this page, you will find some accommodations from the site.

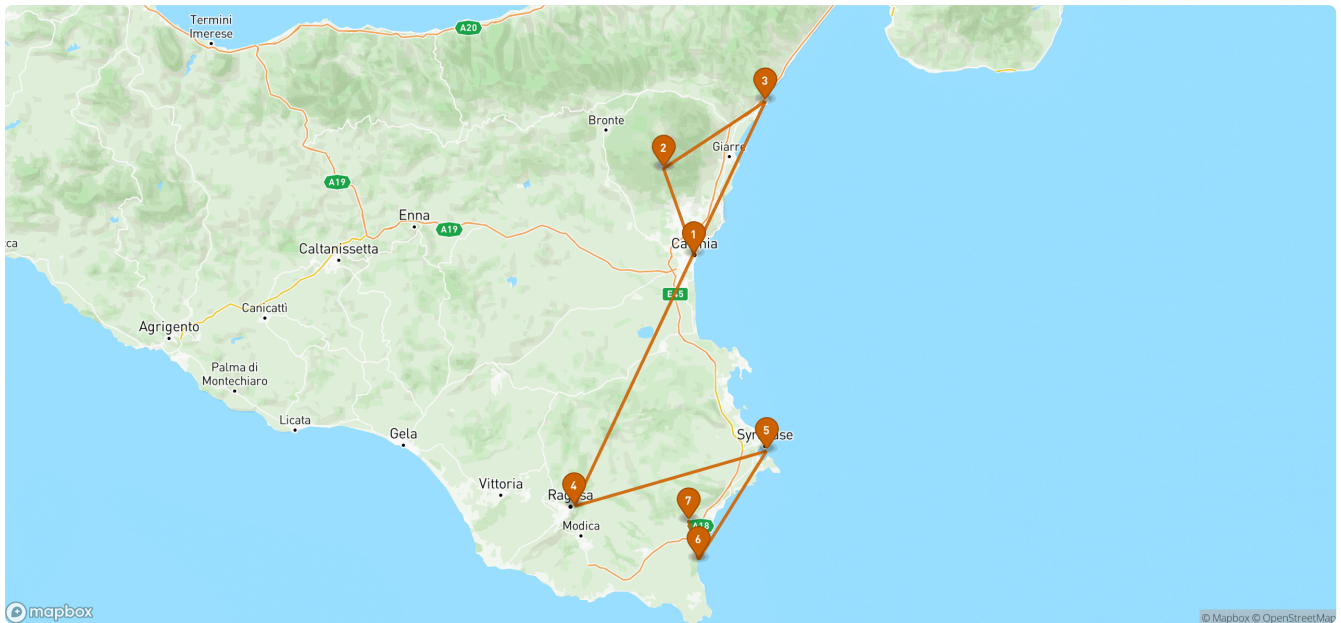
And what if Etna is closed?

The volcano's activity changes: **check the ordinance and bulletins** the day before. Alternatively, visit the **Alcantara gorges**, or dedicate that time to **Aci Castello** and **Acireale**.

Can I change the order of the days?

Yes: days **4, 5, 6 and 7** are in the South-East and can be swapped. Days **1, 2 and 3** are more convenient if done from Catania.

Route map



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

Practical information

DURATION

7 days

GETTING AROUND

By **car**: renting one is the most convenient choice, as many stops are poorly connected by public transport. The cities are best explored on foot.

BEST TIME

Spring and autumn. In summer it gets very hot: it's better to **set off early** each morning. In winter, Etna may be snow-covered or closed.

TOTAL WALKING

about 333.4 km

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