

Sicily: The Ultimate East Coast Itinerary for Wine Lovers

Whether you're looking to island-hop or stay on the mainland, we'll show you where to get the best wine and food along Sicily's eastern coast.

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Dimora delle Balze

Noto, Marzamemi and Ortigia

Sicily's southeast presents a trove of food and wine against a backdrop of architecture, history and seascapes. To explore these distinctions, stay in different locations. In the countryside near Baroque-era Noto, spend a few nights at **Dimora delle Balze**. This 19th-century farmhouse has been restored into an elegant resort. Its striking decor caters to lovers of high-end, contemporary Italian design.

Filled with limestone masterpieces, Noto's hilltop location is made for sunset strolls. As dusk approaches, buildings along the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, strategically aligned to catch the light, glow like embers burn within them.

In contrast to touristy Taormina, Noto, a **UNESCO**-protected town rebuilt after Sicily's devastating earthquake in 1693, transports visitors to an era before mass travel. The streets bustle with old men who smoke and gossip, while women dart into *macellerias* and *pasticcerias*. Shops brim with both visitors and locals, with ceramicists, cobblers and wine bars interspersed throughout town.

A fine dining offer can be found at **Ristorante Crocifisso**. Book in advance for inventive Sicilian fare served in a slick, minimalist space. The wine list leans organic, offbeat and natural. Another open is to a stool at the bar in stylish **Manna**, where Sicilian classics receive contemporary riffs and the fairly priced wine list is dense with Italian labels.

Nature Reserve of Vendicari

During aperitivo hour, skip the spritz on the Corso and head to **Anche gli Angeli**. This cool concept store/bar/eatery is housed inside a series of vaulted brick rooms, and it transports diners to urban **Rome**.

It's a rite of passage to snack on treats from Caffè Sicilia. An old-school dessert shop from 1892, the simple interior belies the dedication to fresh ingredients that drive its gelato and granita flavor. Otherwise, hit Pasticceria Mandolfiore. Two words: ricotta granita.

East of Noto lies the coast. Sicily's seldom revered for its beaches, but the **Nature Reserve of Vendicari** offers quiet, clean spots for swimming. It also sells its own craft beer, which can be purchased and enjoyed on the path to the beach. If you've got a few hours, follow the turquoise coastline to the abandoned tuna processing factory ("*tonnara*") and museum, or hike nature trails to spot a flamboyance of flamingoes.

After a dip, head 15 minutes south to seaside Marzamemi. Packed with locals and Italian vacationers, few Americans have discovered this sun-bleached gem. A fishing village and site of another defunct *tonnara*, Marzamemi houses atmospheric restaurants, bars and retail shops that peddle seafood delicacies. Grab a few jars of tuna and salted cured roe, known as *bottarga*, then settle in for lunch at **La Cialoma**, set in an old stone house trimmed in powder blue. Sit at a table that faces the 18th century piazza or on the breezy terrace that overlooks the Mediterranean. There, order the grilled fish, red prawns and pasta *con le sarde* (sardines) with a bottle of Catarratto.



Noto

Not even Noto's beauty can prepare you for the splendor of Ortigia, an island connected by two bridges to Syracuse. Called the "White Pearl of Siracusa" for its luminescent buildings, this den of rustic beauty will trigger a photo spree around every medieval bend.

Ortigia deserves several days as the island overflows with drinking and eating opportunities. Book [Ortea Palace](#), a newly debuted luxury property, as your base. Peruse food stalls mounded high with eggplants and sea urchin on Via de Benedictis. Record video of the sandwich "genius" at [Caseificio Borderi](#) before you try into an overstuffed original. Wander past the Temple of Apollo, and land at [Monzù Sicily](#) for granita and espresso. Gawk at a Caravaggio inside [Chiesa di Santa Lucia alla Badia](#). The [Duomo di Siracusa](#), a palimpsest of architecture and history, will be the star of your Instagram feed. In the evening, grab a seasonal cocktail at BOATS. Or settle in for Sicilian wine, craft beer and excellent antipasti platters that heap with mortadella at Évoe Wine Bar. Sleep, eat, drink, repeat.