

Taking time to live well

the  
simple  
things

July

TASTE

Edible flowers & counting butterflies • Small wonders • Sunrise swimming  
Peach cobbler • Good weeds & garden dens • How Nagomi helps  
Blue space thinking • Railroad adventures • Ice dyeing & watermelon lollies



MY CITY\*

# PALERMO

LINDA SARRIS INTRODUCES US TO THE BLUE SKIES, BEACHES  
AND AL FRESCO BARS OF SICILY'S CAPITAL CITY





**What's the shopping like?**

Shopping in Palermo is mainly food-focused – salt-packed capers, cured anchovies, bunches of oregano, sun-dried tomatoes, almonds and pistachios are all favourites with tourists. But look out for small shops with a bright orange ALAB (Associazione Liberi Artigiani-Artisti Balarm) sticker in their window. This means that it's part of Palermo's artisans association and you can find unique handmade items here, such as jewellery, art, ceramics, clothing and handbags.

**Where do you like to escape to?**

A walk along the Foro Italico waterfront or a sit down in the Villa Giulia park are good for a quick escape. In terms of the seaside, I avoid the crowds on the sandy beaches and go to a rocky beach in Addaura instead.

**Which tourist attractions do the locals love?**

I love the Royal Palace and Palatine Chapel, which includes the Norman-era palace and the most amazing mosaics in the chapel. Having said that, the Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio in Piazza Bellini has similar mind-blowing mosaics and intricately carved wooden ceilings – it's also cheaper and more conveniently located. For an unforgettable view, try climbing to the rooftop of the Santa Caterina d'Alessandria church.

**What has been your best discovery about your city?**

Places like the Camera Delle Meraviglie, a blue room in a private residence, covered in gold and silver Arabic writing; the Palazzina Cinese, a former royal residence; and a pastry shop inside an old monastery. These aren't the typical tourist hot-spots, but they're places you can discover if you dig a bit deeper and stay a while longer.

**What do you miss most if you've been away?**

Although it's a kind of chaotic living, I love the melting pot of culture, art and cuisine here in Sicily.

**What would surprise a newcomer to your city?**

That it's not dangerous – the mafia isn't out to get you.

**What one thing would you change if you could?**

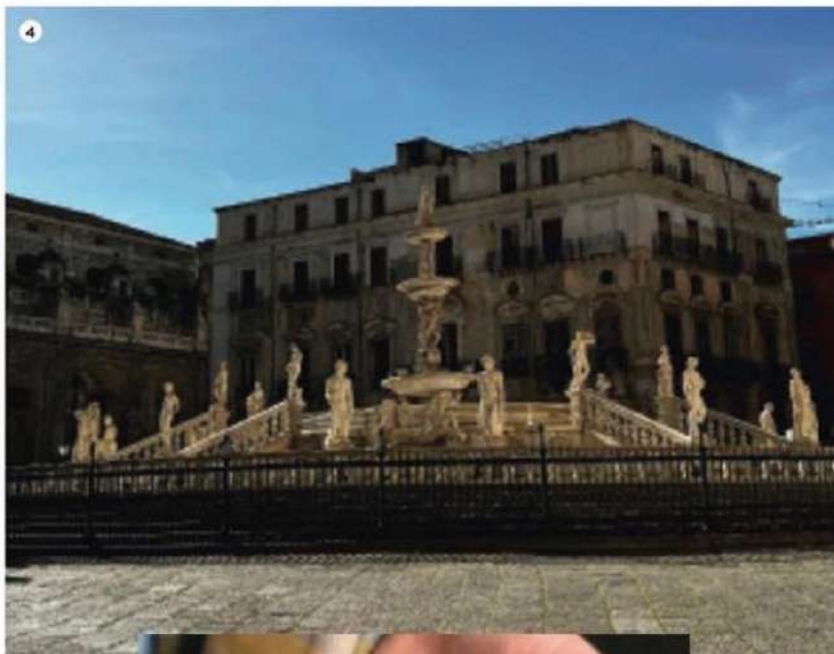
Sadly, we have problems with litter. I often see locals eat a sandwich and then throw the wrapper on the ground. Our city has so much to offer, but rubbish in alleyways isn't pleasant for anyone.

**Where would you recommend somebody to stay?**

Use the Quattro Canti as a central point and find an apartment or hotel within a 10-minute walk.

**What keeps you here and where else would you live?**

I love the city living, the slow pace of life, the great weather, food and culture, and the locals. However, I've always wanted to live in Brazil as I travelled there extensively when I was younger. »



④ Narrow alleys with overhanging balconies are plentiful in Palermo. ⑤ Delicious pastries from i Segreti del Chiostro. ⑥ The Teatro Massimo opera house, as viewed from the Palazzo Sovrana apartments. ⑦ Piazza Pretoria with its majestic marble fountain. ⑧ Holy cannoli, the pastries are heavenly! Especially when produced in a monastery to age-old recipes. ⑨ The breathtaking mosaics at the Palatine chapel





*“Sicilians are warm, inviting people, ready to welcome you into their homes. They’ll treat you like family”*



the town, there’s an extraordinary botanical garden, Orto Botanico dell’Università degli Studi di Palermo, the waterfront promenade at Foro Italico, and several parks, such as the Giardino Garibaldi in Piazza Marina where you’ll find a huge banyan tree – reportedly the oldest tree in Sicily. One of my favourite town squares is Piazza Bellini, where there’s a landmark, monument or church on every side. Outside of the city, Capo Gallo or Lo Zingaro Nature Reserves are great for hiking and swimming away from the crowds.

**What’s the light like in Palermo?**

It twinkles between terracotta, golden yellow and peachy coral. And because we have a wonderful climate, the skies remain blue all year round.

**Tell us about the people who live in your city.**

The pedestrian zones and promenades are filled with Palermitani doing their traditional *passaggiata* – a leisurely evening or weekend walk. Sicilians are warm, inviting people, ready to welcome you into their homes and share anything from an espresso or a glass of wine to a full-on meal of epic proportions. They might seem slightly suspicious or curious at first, but as soon as you crack open that shell, they’ll treat you like family.

**Where do you like to gather with friends?**

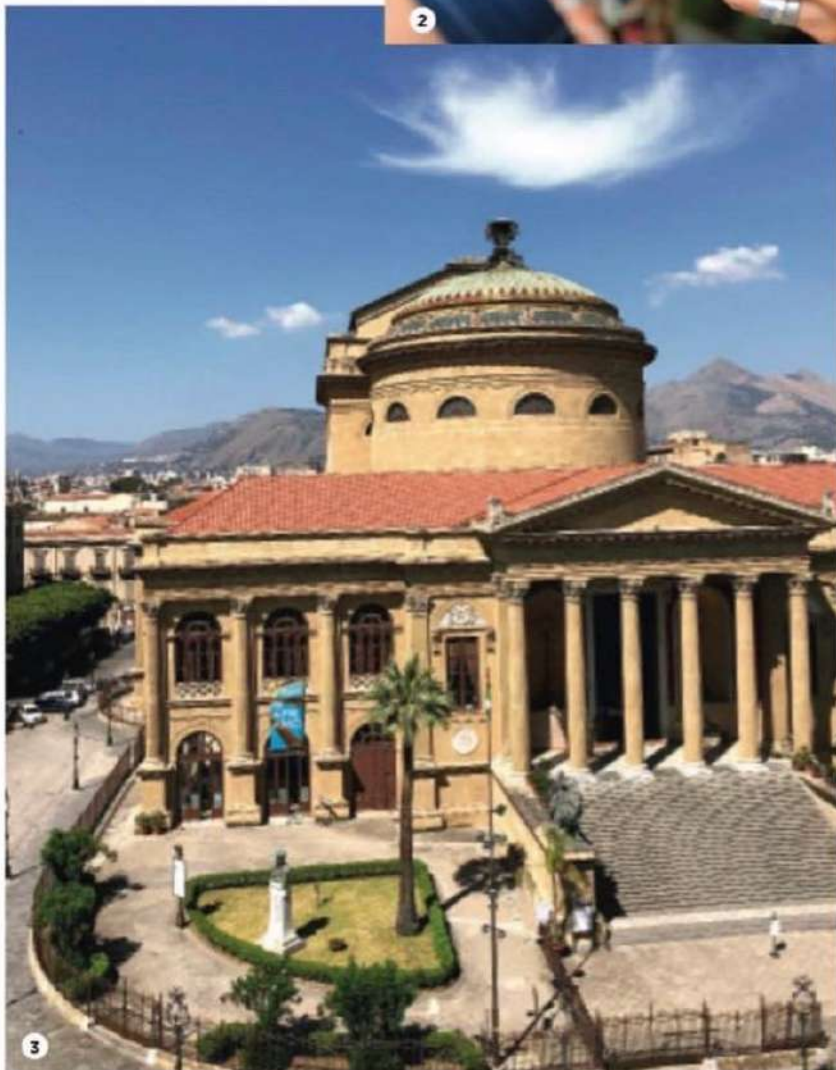
The extraordinary weather lends itself to spending a lot of time outdoors. The bars are quite small, and most of the action happens out in the streets. There are popular piazzas in the historic centre, such as Piazza Sant’Anna, Bellini, and Caracciolo, where young people gather to share drinks, have a dance, find love, or just catch up.

**Tell us about eating in your city.**

This is Palermo’s *pièce de résistance*! The cost of fresh ingredients is low compared to other Italian cities. You can eat very well for practically nothing, as long as you know where to look. Traditional street foods found here include *panelle* (chickpea fritters), *crocchè* (fried potato croquettes), *sfinzione* (fluffy pizzas topped with breadcrumbs, onion, and anchovies), and the famous *pane câ meusa* (spleen and lung sandwich).

**What’s your favourite way to get about the city?**

Either on foot or by bike. I live in the historic centre and everything I need is within a 20-minute walk. And I prefer the *vita lenta*, or slow life. If I’m heading out of town, I’ll rent a car or take public transport, and for errands or a quick dip at the beach in the middle of the day, I scoot around on the back of my boyfriend’s cherry-red Vespa... just about as Italian as you can get!







**LINDA SARRIS** is a food travel consultant and private chef. She organises culinary retreats and has written a guidebook: *Southern Italy* (Moon Travel). Follow at [lindasarris.com](http://lindasarris.com), and on Insta: @thecheekychef.



## LINDA'S PERSONAL TOUR

### Favourite shops

#### RADICI DI SICILIA

One of my favorite places in town to pick up a bouquet. [facebook.com/radicidisicilia](https://facebook.com/radicidisicilia)

#### EDIZIONI PRECARIE

This screenprint studio makes beautiful notebooks using the papers used to wrap fish, meat and veg in the markets. [edizionipecarie.it](https://edizionipecarie.it)

### Favourite café

#### CASA STAGNITTA

This family-run coffee roaster has been open for nearly 100 years. They also serve coffee-infused pastries and gelato. [facebook.com/casa.stagnitta](https://facebook.com/casa.stagnitta)

### Favourite bar

#### BOTANICO BAR

Just off Piazza Sant'Anna,

Botanico offers great drinks and groovy playlists. [facebook.com/botanicobarpalermo](https://facebook.com/botanicobarpalermo)

### Favourite restaurants

#### CORONA TRATTORIA

Featuring mainly fish and seafood dishes but also traditional 'cucina siciliana' such as arancinette, sardine meatballs or panelle. There's an amazing local wine list, too. [coronatrattoria.it](https://coronatrattoria.it)

#### FÜNNACO PIZZALAB

Simply put, the best damn pizzeria in town! [funnaco.it](https://funnaco.it)

### Favourite food market

#### MERCATO DI BALLARÒ

This arab-style market is over 1,000 years old. Wonderful veg,

fishmongers serving up whole swordfish and tuna, and whole lambs hanging in the butcher shop windows. It's a wild sight, with plenty of tastings to enjoy. Via Ballarò

### Favourite hotel

#### PALAZZO SOVRANA

Located in front of the Teatro Massimo opera house, Palazzo Sovrana's luxury apartments offer style and service. [palazzosovrana.it](https://palazzosovrana.it)

### How to spend an hour

#### I SEGRETI DEL CHIOSTRO

A pastry shop inside the Monastero di Santa Caterina d'Alessandria. Buy a tray of delicious snacks and enjoy them in the tree-lined internal courtyard. [isegretidelchiostro.com](https://isegretidelchiostro.com) 🍷



- 📍 Seek out Botanico Bar for great food, drinks and music.
- 📍 Wake up and smell the coffee at Casa Stagnitta, a family-run business that's 'bean' roasting for almost 100 years.
- 📍 Street art at Mercato di Ballarò.
- 📍 Radici di Sicilia supplies the best blooms in town, according to Linda