



SICILY

**A LAND WHERE
TOURISM AND NATURE
LIVE IN HARMONY**

Introduction

Islands, volcanoes, forests, rivers, caves, lakes, swamps and salt marshes. Each environment is a precious variety of protected flora and fauna, to be enjoyed by enthusiasts, thanks to a network of parks and natural reserves. Sicily is the bridge between Europe and the African continent. Changing seasons, the many colours of sunny autumn, premature spring, mild winters and African summers offer to tourists, who are fond of nature, exciting opportunities throughout the year. On foot, by boat, by bike, canoeing, skiing and even swimming or diving, naturalist tourism on this island, in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, is unlimited.



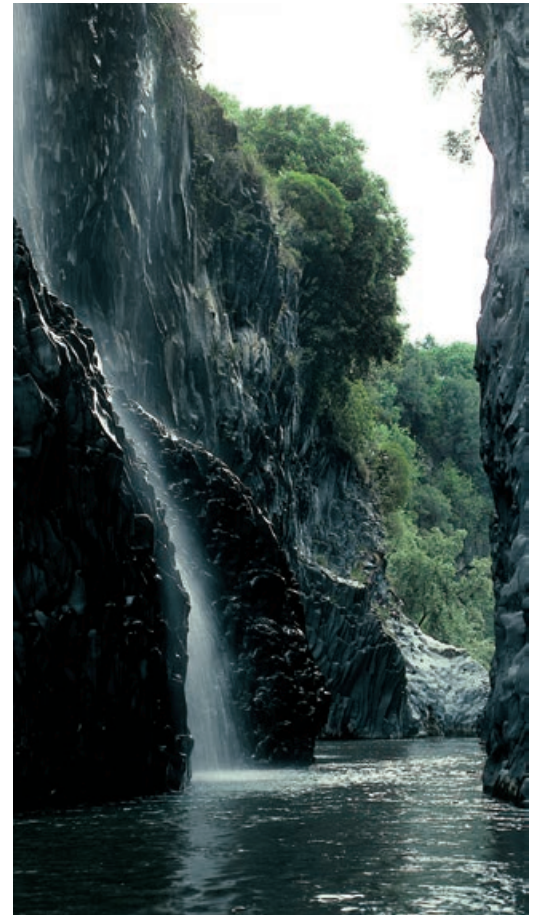
There are five large natural lungs on the island that flow from east to west, in addition to the many nature reserves, dozens of jewels set between the sea, high altitude forests and wetlands, a substantial scientific and landscape heritage, from the beginning of the 90s subtracted from environmental degradation. From Cefalù to the inside of the Imera Valley, the cultivated landscape opens the door to the Madonie Park with its villages of art.



The Park of the Sicani Mountains, with the Sosio River Valley, offers a rural landscape of cultivated hills, rocky ravines covered by forests and Mediterranean shrubs.



The Alcántara Park stretches along 50 km of the river Alcántara flowing between rocks and gorges, in a geological landscape of awesome beauty.





The Nebrodi Park, with its forests of tall trees, adjacent to the Alcantara River Park bring together three provinces, Messina, Catania and Enna.



It owes its fame and its appeal to the largest active volcano in Europe, Mount Etna Park. In eruptive phase, offers an extraordinary spectacular view that you can see up close thanks to the expert local guides.

The journey between the Sicilian parks gives you amazing views that will surprise you, depending on the season, rural landscape, altitude, soils and vegetation.



The heritage of monumental trees is protected today thanks to the existence of the parks. They are olive trees, yew trees and secular chestnut trees, like that of a hundred horses of S. Alfio on the slopes of Mount Etna. But it is not uncommon to see even oak trees and beech trees of extraordinary dimensions, which live undisturbed on the most remote and highest parts of the mountains.





Numerous breathtaking views, one after the other along the valley of the river Alcantara, shaped by the encounter between water and fire, where there are natural pools to cool down from the summer heat.





In a riverine vegetation resists now rare that mixes with prickly pears, fruit orchards and olive groves worked by man as the waterways are a paradise for those who love adventure and rafting.

The headquarters of the Etna Park is located in Nicolosi on the northern slope of the volcano, but several lively villages surround the mountain. During the winter, the snow transforms the landscape of the volcano offering skiers, skilifts and ski trails, in the middle of nature.





The volcano is accessible at any time: in spring and autumn the best way to appreciate the charm is the high altitude trekking.



On the slopes of Etna, as well as in different locations on the island, golf enthusiasts find green golf courses for professionals or just to practice, to play in full relaxation and enjoy the favorable climate.





The Nebrodi Park stretches along the Tyrrhenian coast. A very green Sicily, from wide open spaces where eagles and vultures fly. Rural landscapes and ancient cultures related to work, raising livestock, including the famous horses sanfratellani that still survives.



Along the Madonie mountain ridge, nestled on the slopes for defensive reasons, you will find dozens of medieval villages that still preserve the charm of time and constitute the urbanized area of the Madonie Park which includes 19 municipalities of which there are 4 new awaiting entries.



In the Madonie Park, farming and cultivation is still done the old fashioned way, by hand (cultivation of wheat, sheep farming and related activities).



The spectacle of nature never ceases to amaze: in the reserves and picnic areas managed by the Region of Sicily Forestry Authority, adventure trails leading to easy access to silent and untouched corners of nature.





Examples are: the marshes of Vendicari, the Reserve Cava Grande del Cassibile, the Reserve Pantalica and the Anapo Valley, dunes covered in spring by semi-arid vegetation, the mouths of the rivers Belice and Irminio.

In western Sicily true jewels of nature, were subtracted to the assaults of cement: the Zingaro Nature Reserve, Saline of Trapani and Paceco, the Islands of the Lagoon of Marsala and Mount Cofano.



Natural paradises more isolated, and therefore better preserved, are found instead in the smaller islands: Mount Fossa of the tree Ferns on the heights of the island of Salina in the Aeolian Islands, the natural forests that cover the island of Marettimo to Egadi, the volcanic landscape with the terraces of Pantelleria.



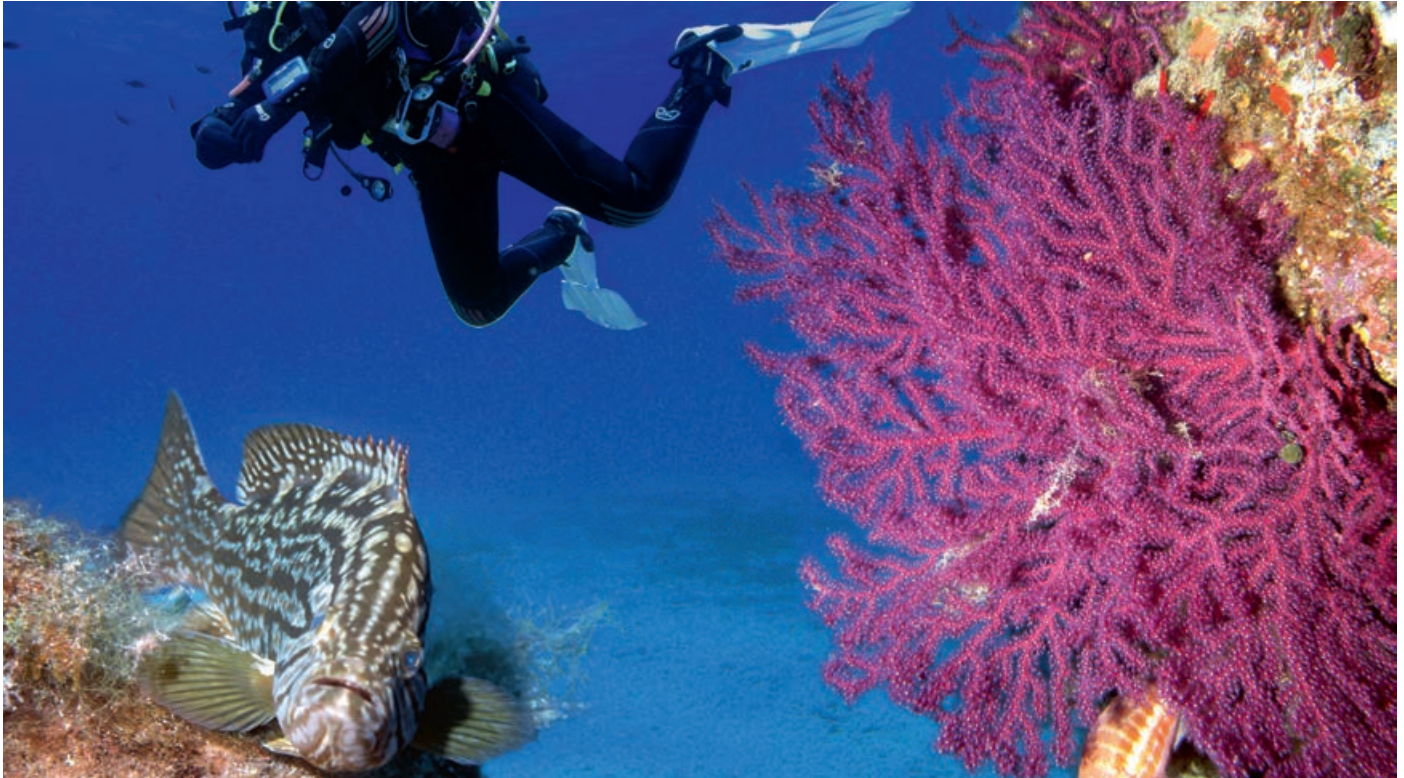
A separate chapter is worth the spectacle of Stromboli, with its active volcano spray of fire to be admired at first light, which attracts hundreds of climbers from all over Europe.



Marine Protected Areas, recently established, have extended the constraints of full protection to the coast and seabed, thus ensuring the protection of the environment vital for biodiversity and fish stocks, from the precious underwater meadows of *Posidonia oceanica*.



First in Europe to launch a message for the protection of the sea and its underwater treasures was the small island of Ustica a few miles from the coast of Palermo.





From the port of Trapani hydrofoils allow you to reach the Egadi Islands: Favignana, Marettimo and the small Levanzo, where the crystal-clear sea and traditions related to fishing in all seasons attract tourists and divers.



African scenarios and the seabed with its unique clarity, along with a wealth of amazing underwater fauna, are concentrated in the Pelagie Islands, the islands of the high seas, in the Strait of Sicily.





Lampedusa and Linosa, with the small rock of Lampione are the most southern parts of Italy. On these beaches, which are protected, the turtle *Caretta caretta* returns to nest thanks to the efforts of environmentalists, while in spring the whales return to sail the sea of the Archipelago.

Around the city of Palermo, Siracusa and Acireale many Marine Protected Areas were born: Capo Gallo and Isola delle Femmine, the Plemmirio and the Islands of the Ciclopi.



The Plemmirio and the Maddalena peninsula, passed the mouth of the River Cyane of Syracuse, are an oasis of clean water available to snorkelers and underwater archeology, with specific activities dedicated to schools for the blind and disabled.



Monuments of lava rock to admire, just outside the city of Catania, are the rocks of the Cyclops, the legendary cliffs opposite the village of Acitrezza, between the mass of Etna and the blue of the Ionian Sea.

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