

CATANIA

ITALY

👤 10,760,305 📞 +351 🌞 20°C

🏠 EURO (EUR)

✈️ WEEKLY

👤 ELLEN GRADY



CATANIA HOSTS WONDERFUL CONCERTS IN SEPTEMBER AND NEARBY TAORMINA IS A GLAMOROUS RETREAT



THE CENTRE

Catania's Piazza Duomo is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, famous for its elegant Baroque cathedral dedicated to St Agatha – patron saint of the city – and the colourful fish market nearby.

SLEEP **Hotel Agathae** (Via Etna 229, 095 250 0436, hotelagathae.catania.com, rooms from €90) is quite a find – family-run and central. Its breakfast room has a lovely terrace where guests can dine outside most of the year

EAT Colourful combinations of fish and vegetables from the market next door will tempt your appetite at the **Ambasciata del Mare** (Piazza Duomo 6, 095 341003). Try the pumpkin flowers with shrimps (*fiori di zucca con gamberetti*).

CULTURE Head for **Le Ciminiere** (Viale Africa) where **Etnafest** (etnafest2012.it) is presenting a gala for director Vladimir Ashkenazy on 4 September. There are concerts featuring pianists Davide Cabassi and Tatiana Larionova on 7 September and local *enfant prodige* pianist Alessandro Mazzamuto on 15 September.

SHOP **La Rinascente** (Via Etna 159) and **COIN** (Via Etna 112) are sleek department stores stocking the latest Italian fashion.

TAORMINA

A jet-set haven, this charming

INFO

Fontanarossa Airport is 6km from the city centre.

Bus

The Alibus shuttle service runs between the airport and the central station and is a 15-minute journey. Buses run from 5am to midnight and one-way tickets costs €2. Other services are available to all major Sicilian destinations, including Taormina and Palermo.

Taxi

The journey from the airport to the city centre costs €30 for up to four passengers, and takes around 25 minutes. All major car-hire companies are represented at the airport.

Tourist info

The main office is at 172 Via Vittorio Emanuele II, 095 7425518, (comune.catania.it).

mountaintop town is just a short bus-ride away from Catania.

SLEEP The **Imperiale** (Via Circonvallazione 11, 0942 625202, imperiale.taormina.com, rooms from €252) is close to the heart of town. The rooftop pool, garden and gourmet restaurant make the most of the hotel's marvellous views.

EAT The **Bellevue** restaurant at the historic Hotel Metropole (Corso Umberto 154, 0942 625417) is expensive and utterly delightful. The Michelin-star menu is designed by chef Andreas Zangeri and the terrace offers grand views. **Granduca** (Corso Umberto 172, 0942 24983) serves the best pizza in town, and also has exceptional views.

CULTURE The ancient **Greek Theatre** (Via del Teatro) commands a stunning panorama over the Straits of Messina and Mount Etna, and has long provided inspiration for artists, writers and musicians. From 15-21 September the **Taormina Book Festival** is held at the public gardens.

LATER One of the best spots for a bit of after-midnight atmosphere is **La Giara** (Vico La Floresta 1), once the haunt of Rita Hayworth and Ava Gardner.

TIP Catch a cable-car down to Mazzarò, at the foot of the hill, for a well-earned swim, followed by lunch on the beach at the **Barcaiolo** (Via Castelluccio 43, 0942 625633); choose local marinated red shrimps or baked sardines.

MOUNT ETNA

Vineyards on the eastern flank of Europe's largest active volcano produce formidable wines; harvest season is a great time to visit.

SLEEP Stay near the old wine-shipping harbour of Riposto at the foot of the volcano. Surrounded by lemon groves and vineyards, the most peaceful hotel in this area is a converted wine-press: the tiny **Zash Country Boutique Hotel** (Via Strada Provinciale 60, Archi di Riposto, 095 782 8932, zash.it, rooms from €100, special September offer includes three nights B&B and wine-tasting at a local vineyard for €150 per person). Ask for the charming glass-walled Garden Room in the centre of a secluded garden.

EAT For dinner go to the **Borgo dell'Etna** (Via Continella 10, 095 288 3152) in the next-door town of Giarre. It has a reputation for exceptionally good Sicilian food – try their signature dish, *ravioli d'agnello all'aglassata* (glazed lamb ravioli).

CULTURE First planted in 1727, the sunny vineyards of **Barone di Villagrande** (Via del Bosco 25, Milo) keep this well-run cellar overflowing. Taste (and buy, if you like) some of the finest wines of this terroir. Four elegant rooms are available for longer stays.

LATER An after-dinner stroll through the yachting harbour of Riposto will provide a perfect ending to your day.