

A Trip to Trapani and Erice

Sicily is a large island and, although we'd love to explore every city, village, hill and coastline, there's no way we'd ever be able to in just 91 days. But some cities are close enough to Palermo to serve as easy day trips. Trapani and its hilltop neighbor Erice are two such towns, just a couple hours away, and we hopped on an early morning bus to check them out.



Though it's the smaller of the two cities today, with a population of just over 25,000, Erice has the richer history. Originally known as Eryx, it was founded by Trojan exiles and appears a few times in mythology. It's here that winged [Daedalus](#) landed, while his son Icarus kept soaring upwards toward the sun. And Virgil mentions it as the place where Hercules slew one of Aphrodite's sons, whose name was Eryx.

Ancient lore certainly feels at home in Erice; traversing its quiet, stoned streets is like strolling through a long distant time. From the mountain heights, there is a magnificent view of sprawling Trapani, which sticks out into the Mediterranean like a witch's crooked finger. Trapani, today a bustling city of 70,000, was originally the port for Erice. It was known as Drépanon by the Greeks, which means "sickle", in reference to the city's shape. According to mythology, the land appeared after Demeter carelessly let her sickle fall to earth.

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