



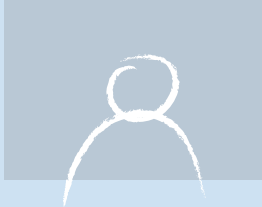
Provincia di
Trapani

Pantelleria



Welcome





Pantelleria is...

Hundreds of thousands of years ago a large explosion in the heart of the Mediterranean made the summit of a volcanic crater emerge: Pantelleria, the black pearl of the Mediterranean. In spite of its insular nature, Pantelleria reveals almost everywhere its character as an island of farmers: here the famous *Zibibbo* grape is

cultivated from which raisins and the *Passito* and *Moscato* wines are produced, while the caper is considered to be of excellent quality. In the terraced districts, with names of Arab origins, the typical farmers houses, the *dammusi*, built with the dark lava stone and covered with an extremely white domed roof can be seen dotted

around. Warm waters and mud baths represent real natural centres of wellbeing. The island presents numerous traces of settlements, including the famous Neolithic site of *Mursia* with the tombs of the *Sesi*. The construction of the austere Pantelleria Castle is attributed to the Normans.

Lago di Venere (Lake of Venus)



Capers



Grape Zibibbo





History

The first settlements on the island date back to prehistoric times. With the Phoenicians first and then the Carthaginians, Pantelleria had great commercial importance, above all due to its position in the centre of the Strait of Sicily. The Romans conquered it in the II century B.C. After the Vandals and the Byzantines came the Arabs, who had a

strong influence on the territory and culture of the area: to them is possibly owed the cultivation system of terraces, “*iardini*” which, with circular stone walls still protect today the citrus fruit cultivated inside and the famous *dammusi* from the wind. Traces of the domination can be still glimpsed today in the names of the various districts: *Gadir*, *Bukkuram*,

Rekale. The name Pantelleria itself probably comes from the Arabic *bent el-rion*, daughter of the wind, due to the strong winds which often blow here. The island passed into the hands of the Normans and, in the XVI century, came under attack from Muslims and pirates. During the Second World War it was the target for numerous bombardments.

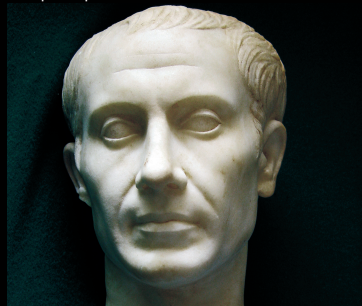
Lago di Venere, Punic Sanctuary



Imperial portraits in marble



Imperial portraits in marble





Landscape

It is the chromatic contrast which is the most characteristic element of the landscape of the island. The small port of *Scauri* is filled with the colours of the fishing boats, driving along the perimeter road, one becomes “dazzled” by the dark black of the volcanic stone which alternates with the intense green and the colours of the vegetation growing on the strips of terraces, this is punctuated here and there by the white of the local habitations, the *dammusi*. All around there is the intense blue of the crystalline sea accessible by numerous coves (we must mention *Balata dei Turchi* and *Cala Levante*), with its depths

crowded with life. While the rocky, jagged, black coastline overlooking the sea forms caverns and caves, like the *Arco dell'Elefante*, an enormous natural sculpture in lava stone and one of the symbols of the identity of the island, the inland landscape offers very varied attractions: mountainous reliefs which culminate in the extinct crater of the *Montagna Grande* allow the enjoyment of 360° views over the sea and the large cultivated valleys (not to be missed is the *Valle del Monastero*), while on the slopes of the mountain, the *favare*, emissions of water vapour from the rocks and the *cuddie*, which form small

reliefs, create a suggestive Pantellerian scenery. Then, moving into the territory, - all of a sudden - there is the surprising sight of the *Lago di Venere* born in the cone of the extinct volcano. Possibly due to the suggestion of the place, or due to the possibility of taking pleasant natural mud baths here, legend has it that in this incandescent sea blue and green coloured mirror, the reflection of the Goddess of Beauty could be seen. All this and much more has made Pantelleria famous all over the world, raising it to the status of privileged holiday destination for artists and fashion designers.



Nature

Where the mosaic of the vine and olive cultivations are interrupted, the green of the scrub, the garigue and the evergreen broad-leaves prevail. The natural vegetation covers, for about 1,300 hectares, *Montagna Grande*, Mount Gibeles, the south-east slopes of *Kuddia Attalora*, to then descend towards the sea and therefore towards the *Serra di Ghirlanda*. The

wood is made up of the maritime pine (*Pinus marittima*), the holm oak (*Quercus ilex*) and artificial plantings of examples of *aleppo* pine which live alongside the shrubs of the scrub like *erica* (*Erica multiflora*), myrtle (*Myrtus communis*), rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), and thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) on the coast near to the sea.

Among the medicinal plants which grow naturally, chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*) and the dandelion (*Taraxacum officinalis*) are to be found. The island is rich in migratory birds which recognise it as a stopping off point between Africa and Europe. A sight to admire in spring is when large flocks arrive from the sea, carried by the winds and the currents.

Capparis spinosa



Myrtus communis



Quercus ilex







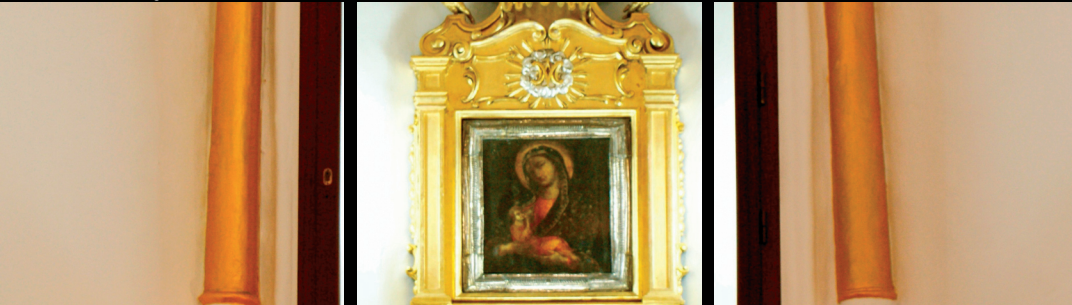
Religion Remembrance Bonds

On the 16th of October, the population of the island pays homage to its patron saint, San Fortunato: the simulacrum is transported in the sea on a boat and is followed, in a full blown procession, by other crafts. After the celebration of a suggestive mass on the sea,

before returning to port, garlands of flowers are thrown into the sea. The festivity for *Madonna della Margana*, the other patron saint of the island, is celebrated with two processions: in the first (end of May) the votive painting is carried from the Mother

Church to the Sanctuary in *Margana* district; in the second (end of October) the painting is brought back to the church. For the festivity for San Giuseppe, on the 19th of March, a altar is set up and decorated with food products, including the characteristic decorated bread.

Madonna della Margana



Pantellerian Garden





Archaeology

Inhabited at least since Neolithic times, the island presents in *Mursia* district, a village with strong traces of a surrounding wall and the remains of a large necropolis with megalithic constructions called *sesi*, a unique testimony in the

archaeological panorama, burial places made in dry stone with a number of openings which, through narrow passages led to the ogival chambers destined to hold the dead. The largest still conserved, *Sese Grande*, has twelve

entrances and was probably destined for the village chiefs. In *San Marco* there is a Phoenician acropolis of which today, the remains are beginning to be brought to light, while right at the *Lago di Venere*, ancient sanctuaries rose.

Sese



Ashlar Vase in ollare stone



Faience beads





Monuments

The inhabited area of Pantelleria was heavily bombarded during the Second World War; this caused the destruction of most of the monuments of the town: the Mother Church itself was rebuilt in the 1950s in the central square of the town, in the

same place where the original rose. The austere castle, made in lava stone and looking out over the port, probably has Byzantine origins. It was enlarged by the Normans and was reorganised many times over the course of time. The inside, on three levels,

presents large rooms with barrel vaults. Of great interest are the typical *dammusi*, constructions of Arab origin, cube-shaped with a characteristic domed roof, allowing the inside to remain cool in the hot months, and also favouring the harvesting of rainwater.

Castle



Dammuso



Dammuso





Museums Science Education

The castle is used as a Civic Museum with exhibitions of finds coming from the island and the waters immediately in front of it which show the

passage of the prehistoric populations, of the Punics and the Romans. Likewise, the archaeological remains can be visited in their place

of origin, such as the Sesi, the San Marco Acropolis, *Gibiuna* etc. and make up the “Extended museum” of the island of Pantelleria.

Barbacane Castle, amphore





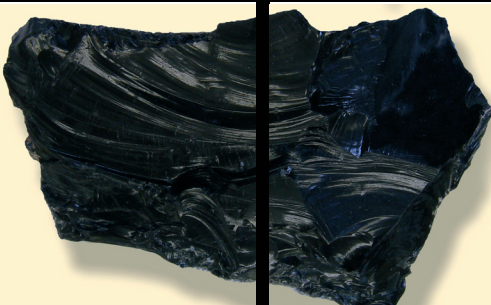
Typical produce

On Pantelleria the terrain yields a number of volcanic stones like quartz, opal and, above all, obsidian. This is a volcanic

glass known since prehistoric times which is a valued material used for the making of utensils and work instruments. The lava

stone itself is also another natural resource which was used historically (and still today) in the building industry.

Obsidian



Lava Stone





Wine and food

The economic and working activity of the island, in spite of the insularity of the territory, has always been pointed towards the land and farming life. Thanks also to the volcanic nature of the terrain, the fields have always supplied produce of excellent quality. The first is the very sweet *Zibibbo*

grape, used as a table grape or conserved dry as raisins, but above all made into superb passito and moscato wines which contribute to the diffusion of the name of the island all over the world. Other typical produce are dry figs, lentils and capers, buds of the flowers of the plants which, not being wild, keep a delicate flavour. Not

to be missed is the typical Pantellerian salad made with potatoes, capers, tomatoes, olives, onion and basil (a variation foresees the addition of mackerel in oil). Also typical are the unsweetened *ravioli* (fresh pasta filled with local ricotta and mint) and, as a dessert, the *baci panteschi* (made from ricotta and chocolate).

Typical products





Shows and events

Although Pantelleria is characterised as a rather solitary place, where one can relax away from daily life, there are various events which animate the area. At the end of June, the celebration of San Pietro and Paolo with

water games, and spaghetti feasts etc takes place. For the last few years, in the month of October, the *Passito Fest* has paid homage to the very renowned wine which has made the island famous all over the world, with a

calendar which foresees events and tasting. In the summer period, with the *regate delle lance pantesche* the undertakings of the old sailing boats are recalled. During Carnival time, the population is involved in parties and masked balls.

Regata delle lance pantesche





Entertainment, sport and free time

Pantelleria offers its visitors the possibility to carry out various activities. The most important are those connected to the sea: guided boat tours of the island (with the possibility of lunch on board) allow the discovery of the most secluded coves and the caverns which are inaccessible from the mainland; numerous diving centres offer submersions to discover the splendid sea bed and marine species of the island, also offering the opportunity to take the scuba diving licence by

frequenting specific courses. The splendid landscapes and woodlands alternating with extended terraces which are perfect for splendid excursions in the territory, in search of local products to taste and buy. But Pantelleria is also a natural centre of wellbeing: in a number of coves (above all at *Nikà* and *Gadir*), thermal high-temperature waters flow which have beneficial effects on the body; the *Lago di Venere*, a splendid site for its landscape, offers the possibility to receive mud

therapy. In *Benikulà* district, by way of a pleasant walk, it is possible to reach the so-called *bagno asciutto*, a cave with natural emissions of water vapour connected to volcanic phenomena where regenerating saunas can be taken. For all of these reasons, Pantelleria has always held a magnetic charm over its visitors and has hosted important people from Cartier-Bresson to Garcia Marquez; in the wake of this, today, many VIPs have made this their holiday destination.



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