



Provincia di
Trapani



Salemi



Welcome





Salemi is...

On the site where once, the ancient Sicanian city of Halyciae rose, set on top of the Monte delle Rose (Mountain of the Roses), is Salemi, one of the most secluded and interesting towns from an artistic and monumental point of view of the province of Trapani. In the

historic centre, ancient town houses made in the local campanella stone, and churches, the oldest of which is the Paleochristian basilica of San Miceli, the medieval castle and the Jewish quarter of Rabato can be found. Usually a quiet town, Salemi fills with people on the day of the

festivity for San Giuseppe (Saint Joseph) (19th March) when the town organises symbolic dinners and transforms itself into a rich continuation of altars decorated in arabesque bread rolls and rich in allegorical elements. The many small museums are not to be missed.

Urban Landscape



Castle



Altar of Saint Joseph





History

The city has extremely ancient origins and is probably to be identified with Halicyae a Sicanian-Elymian settlement. Under the Romans it was a free and neutral town, The name comes from *Salem* given to it by the Arabs whose influence can be seen today in the urban layout of alleys and courtyards. The

reconstruction of the castle on a pre-existing fortified structure was carried out by Frederick II of Swabia. Salemi had an important role in the insurrections of 1848 and even more in the actions of The Thousand in 1860: from the Town hall of Salemi, on the 14 May 1860, Garibaldi proclaimed the dictatorship. The town has developed a

certain cultural dynamism over time, shown by eminent people like the scientist and politician Simone Corleo, the musician Alberto Favara the Jurist Francesco D'Aguirre. A caesura in the social and urban tissue came about with the earthquake of 1968 which caused notable damage and determined the building of new residential areas.

Mount Polizzo, archaeological digs



Rabato Arab Quarter



The apotheosis of Garibaldi





Landscape

Salemi is set on a hill 442 m. above sea level and looks out onto a large picturesque valley on which flourishing gardens extend, alternated between vast fields of wheat and green vines where *regie trazzere* (ancient roads) and mule tracks can still be made out crossing small streams which flow downstream

where the riparian vegetation becomes thicker. In the north the town is decorated by the woodland areas of Filci and Mount Polizzo, an archaeological site of great interest, from whose summit there are marvellous views east over the hilly countryside with olive and almond groves which extend

to the hills of Mokarta, Musita and Giardino Grande. At sunset, one's gaze is attracted to the suggestive natural display of the sun going down over the Egadi islands which are reflected in the Marsala salt pans. There are also spectacular views from Montagna Grande.

View of the Historic Centre



View from panoramic point



Mount Polizzo





Nature

The Montagna Grande mountain complex which is a Sito d'Interesse Comunitario - Site of Community Interest (SCI), extends for about 1300 hectares, belongs to the territory of Salemi and represents a refuge for the flora and fauna, especially in the areas left nearly undisturbed by man. There

are two entrances, in front of the artificial lake of the Rubino dam, into the wood. On the more vertical rocky walls the rock carnation - *Dianthus rupicola* grows which is coded and protected by *Natura 2000*. Although nearly the whole mountain has artificial reforestation areas, based on conifers of Aleppo pine,

natural elements survive which show the evolution of the scrub and the original holm oak wood. Among the animals present in the wood are protected species like the crested porcupine (*Hystrix cristata*) and the hare (*Lepus corsican*). Among the birds it is easy to spot the hoopoe, the white wagtail and the yellow wagtail.

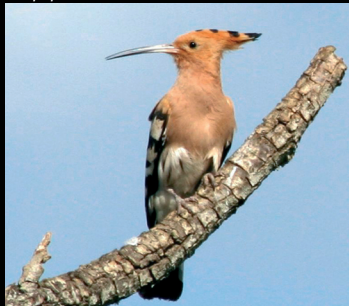
Montagna Grande and Rubino dam



Dianthus rupicola



Upupa





Traditions

Votive loaves of bread are made for many sacred festivities: there are the loaves of S. Giuseppe (Saint Joseph), artistically made for the dressing of the “Cene” - “Suppers”; the “*cuddurèddi*” and the “*cavaddùzzi*” of S. Biagio; the “*cucciddàti*” made on the day dedicated to S. Francesco di Paola; the “*cuddùri*” prepared for S. Antonio Abate and for

S. Elisabetta; the “*manùzzi d'i' morti*” for the commemoration of the dead. *La Cacciata* - The Shooting party is the “*Festa del Grano*” - “Wheat festival” and it is characterised by the recreation of scenes of agricultural life. In particular, the activities from the harvest to the milling and conservation of the wheat are reposed: the ancient

working of the wheat is accompanied by celebratory songs and dances in an atmosphere where the sacred mixes with the profane. Reliving these particular moments, the elders of the town feel like they are going back in time; the younger generation, however, experience an emotion which casts them into tradition.

Making of the bread



Loaves of Saint Joseph



Altar of Saint Joseph





Religion Remembrance Bonds

The city of Salemi is an admirable example of devotion and religion, as shown by the more than one hundred churches and numerous festivities and processions. Among these, the most important is the procession of San Nicola, patron saint of the town which takes place on the 6th of December, and the *Festa di San Biagio*, on the 3rd of

February. Salemi manifests its devotion to San Giuseppe with the making of characteristic altars called *Cene di San Giuseppe* - Suppers of Saint Joseph decorated with bread. The Good Friday procession and the festivity of *Maria Santissima della Confusione*, on the last Sunday in August are well attended. The festivity of Santo Padre which

takes place in May, is also celebrated by the community of people originating from Salemi who have emigrated to Canada. During the Christmas period, in the medieval alleyways of the historic centre, the Nativity scene is recreated with real people, which is touching both for its suggestive backdrop and for the interpretation of the roles.

Procession of San Nicola



San Biagio



Living Nativity Scene





Inside the church of Sant'Agostino there is a statue of the *Madonna del Soccorso* - Madonna of Aid by Antonello Gagini, and a *San Luca* of the Gagini school. The organ in the chiesa del Collegio - College church, painted with flowers and gold plated, from 1711 is interesting. The sacred art section of the Civic Museum is mainly made up of fifteenth and sixteenth century

sculptures, including the statue of the *Madonna con Bambino* - Madonna with Child, attributed to Francesco Laurana and works by Domenico and Antonello Gagini. The frescoes in the second room are notable: *la Caduta di Cristo sotto la croce* - the Fall of Christ under the cross and *Gesù e Maria in trionfo fra Santi* - Jesus and Mary in triumph among the Saints by Francesco Ferrasiti

from Bologna (1667). Among the paintings is a *Madonna degli Angeli* - Madonna of the Angels by Mariano Smiriglio (1604). In the small but suggestive church of Sant'Annedda, one can admire the eighteenth century paintings by Fra Felice da Sambuca, depicting the life of Jesus Christ and the *Crocefisso* - Crucifix on the altar attributed to Milanti from Trapani (XVII century).

College Church, organ



Civic Museum, Madonna with Child



Sant'Annedda Church, painting





Archaeology

The territory of Salemi is constellated with many settlements which can be dated chronologically from Prehistoric to Medieval times. In Mokarta, there is an important ancient Sicanian settlement dateable to the XIII - beginning X century B.C. Studies carried out on Mount Polizzo, have brought to light the remains

of a Elymian city which existed between the VII - VI centuries B.C. Around 325 B.C. the acropolis was occupied by the Punics, and later, between 950 and 1000 A.D., a small village developed, partly on pre-existing structures. Numerous investigations carried out in the historic centre, have brought to light

a frequentation of the site as early as the VII century B.C. One of the most interesting examples of a structure from early Christian times in western Sicily is the *Basilichetta di San Miceli* - (Small basilica of San Miceli), dateable from the IV to the VI century A.D., with mosaic floors and inscriptions in Greek and Latin.

Mokarta, archaeological digs



Jug



San Miceli Basilica, mosaic





Monuments

The church of Sant'Agostino, of thirteenth century origins, has two niches with the statues of Saints Pietro and Paolo on its façade. Connected to it is the monastery with its elegant cloister (XV century). The original layout of the *chiesa dei Gesuiti* - church of the Jesuits dates back to the XVII century; the façade is brightened by a doorway

with four twisted columns. Encompassed in the structure of the ex *Collegio* is an internal chapel with painted walls, realized in 1705 and known as the "*Casa Santa*" - "Sainly House" in that it is a reproduction of the original by Loreto. The castle, dating back to 1070-1113, has a trapezoidal layout with an almost rectangular courtyard and three corner

towers. On the city acropolis the ex Mother Church rose, dedicated to San Nicola of Bari, possibly on the site of a pre-existing pagan temple, which later became a mosque. Its construction was completed in 1761. The architect A. Siza Viera left the ruins of the apse as a scenic background to the square in memory of the earthquake.

Church of the College of Jesuits



Ex Mother Church



Sant'Agostino Monastery, cloister





Museums Science Education

In the church of Sant'Agostino, the Museum of silverware exhibits calices, ciboria, monstrances, reliquaries and various objects of liturgical use in silver; in the section of the sacred vestments, embroidered robes and chasubles, mostly from the XVIII century are exhibited. The example from the XVI century is interesting. The

church of San Bartolomeo holds the Museum of Bread, an exhibition of the bread made for the festivities of San Biagio used to decorate the votive alters of the Suppers of San Giuseppe (Saint Joseph), in the shapes of flowers, plants, animals Christian symbols. In the ex *Collegio dei Gesuiti* (College of the Jesuits), there is the Civic Museum which

includes sections: Sacred Art, Archaeology, Risorgimental. A permanent exhibition in the *Fornace Santangelo* documents "10 years of archaeology in the territory of Salemi". The "Simone Corleo" municipal library has a patrimony of about 100,000 volumes and collects archives and *cinquecentine* (books printed in the XVI century).

Silver and sacred vestments museum



Bread Museum



Municipal Library





Typical produce

Among the craftwork production conserved over time to the modern day, the working of the local stone, the weaving of rugs on the loom and embroidery must be remembered. The construction stone used in Salemi, known as *Campanedda*, is a highly cemented sandstone almost

completely without veins or discontinuous elements, of a natural warm uniform colour which goes from light yellow to pink, which assumes a more intense golden pigmentation after being exposed to the sun and atmospheric agents. It was largely used for supporting walls and

appreciated above all for structures which required particularly refined techniques like doorways, corners, friezes and coats of arms. It is, however, the women with great skill and ability who transform raw materials into masterpieces of lace and embroidery or into fine rugs.

Campanedda Stone



Rug weaving



Embroidery





Wine and food

The variety of traditions, uses and customs linked to the various ethnic groups which over centuries have enriched the cultural patrimony of the town are reflected in the wine and food which includes the production of exceptional oils, fine wines, renowned *ambrosia* and *rosoli* liquors, (alcoholic fruit infusions) of

ancient tradition and the exquisite pastries and cakes with ricotta as the main ingredient produced in the local farms, famous also for the extremely high quality of the hams and cheeses like *pecorino* and the sweet curd *Vastedda del Belice PDO*. Traditionally some companies produce food conserves particularly sun

dried tomatoes, dressed with aromas. The San Biagio and San Giuseppe loaves are flanked by traditional Easter ones with eggs. Typical dish of the supper of San Giuseppe (Saint Joseph) is *pasta con la mollica*, spaghetti dressed with breadcrumbs mixed with oil, sugar, cinnamon and finely chopped parsley.

Vastedda del Belice DOP



Sun-dried tomatoes



Pasta with breadcrumbs





Shows and events

An important event is the *Cene di San Giuseppe* - Suppers of Saint Joseph, with the meal offered to three poor people, symbolizing the Sacred Family, at an altar set up inside a structure resembling a small church, decorated with bread loaves. In these, work and family are celebrated with

the sublimation of the bread as a final reward for a long year of hard work and the celebration of San Giuseppe, as a symbol of silent humble work faced with serene consistency for love of the family. Another significant appointment are the *Giornate Garibaldine* - Garibaldi days which celebrate the proclamation

of the dictatorship assumed by Giuseppe Garibaldi over the island. The celebration is characterised by exhibitions, conventions, concerts, a historic parade in period costume and the spectacular with film-scenes linked to the landscape and the permanence of general Garibaldi in the city.

Altar of Saint Joseph



Garibaldi Days



Garibaldi Days





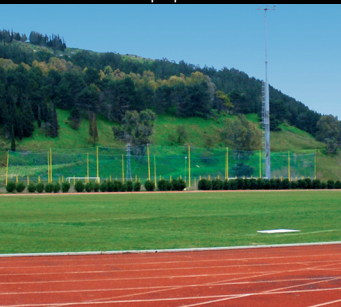
Entertainment, sport and free time

The city offers various ample and diverse possibilities for entertainment and sport: the multi-purpose sports centre of San Giacomo holds football and athletics events and has a large public who crowd the structure daily; the indoor sports stadium

has events linked volleyball, basketball, martial arts and weight lifting; numerous tennis courts complete the facilities of the sporting complex. The rich, hilly territory offers marvellous panoramic views which can be admired on horseback or aboard the ultralights

based at the air base in Bovarella district, in a baricentric position between the A29 motorway junction and the centre of the city. Numerous associations organize various cultural and theatre events during the year which complete the richness of the city.

San Giacomo Multipurpose centre



San Giacomo Multipurpose centre





UNIONE EUROPEA
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REGIONE SICILIANA
Assessorato BB.CC.AA. e P.I.



Provincia Regionale
di Trapani



Sponsor welcome!

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