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CALTAGIRONE & PIAZZA ARMERINA

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Caltagirone is a Unesco Site due to its monumental heritage, century-old traditions in creating ceramics and picturesque folklore events. The name Caltagirone derives from the Arab term Qalat-Jerun, that means "Castle of the burial grounds" because of the presence of vast necropolises throughout the territory. The first inhabited area rose in the surroundings of a castle during the Greek era.

The earthquakes of 1542 and 1693 completely destroyed the town, which was rebuilt in baroque style in the 18th century thanks to the interventions of several architects.

The most interesting monuments are the Norman Cathedral, dedicated to S. Giuliano, preserving beautiful paintings by Francesco Vaccaro (1802-1882), the Chiesa del Collegio erected by the Jesuits in 1593, and the Chiesa di S. Giacomo reconstructed after 1693's earthquake.

Very relevant are also the Chiesa di S. Maria del Monte with its long staircase, decorated with polychrome majolica, that connects the town's upper and lower part; the Corte Capitanale with noteworthy windows and portals by the artist

Gagini (1478-1536), and the Chiesa di S. Nicola dated 1700, now the seat of the Sicilian Ethnologic Museum.

Caltagirone is also seat of the Regional Museum of Ceramics since 1965.

In just 30 minutes, we reach the famous Villa Romana del Casale of Piazza Armerina, one of the most important archaeological sites from Roman times. The nearly 3500 square meters of coloured mosaics covering the floors of the villa, have survived almost intact and have earned the villa the inscription in the World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

The Committee decided to inscribe this property considering that the Villa del Casale at Piazza Armerina is the supreme example of a luxury Roman villa, which graphically illustrates the predominant social and economic structure of its age. The mosaics that decorate it are exceptional for their artistic quality and invention as well as their extent. Among other things you can admire the corridor of the great hunt, the famous room of girls in bikini and that of the erotic scene.

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OPENING HOURS MAY VARY AND MUST BE CHECKED IN ADVANCE. IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE TO VISIT EACH OF THE DESCRIBED SITES.

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