

Easter holidays in the Val di Noto's charming Sicilian baroque

By Dicasainsicilia

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The Easter time has always been one of the most characteristic periods of the year. Especially in the Val di Noto, belonging to the UNESCO's heritage. A great opportunity to treat yourself to a holiday among art, age long traditions and good food.

The Holy Week is the ideal period to discover one of the most charming areas of the island: the Val di Noto. The baroque style of cities such as Noto, Modica, Ragusa Ibla and Scicli, matches perfectly with the mystic, religious climate of the processions that take place between Palm Sunday and Easter.

Sicilian baroque

In 1693 an earthquake razed 53 cities and several villages to the ground between Catania and Ragusa, effacing forever the Norman, medieval aspect of eastern Sicily. But this deadly event was an opportunity for an outstanding work of reconstruction that was made and that gave to Sicily the baroque splendour of the Val di Noto, nowadays UNESCO's world heritage.

The old, Sicilian nobility wanted to reconstruct its cities and dwellings according to the magnificent taste of their time: the baroque. This was the first experiment on a large scale of imposing this style not only on some buildings but also on the whole city plans. This pompous, spectacular architecture, that until then had found its greatest expression in Rome, matched perfectly with the aristocratic, Sicilian mentality and found in the local stone a material that was perfect for the imaginative realizations made by the architects and artisans.

A unique style was born, that of the Sicilian baroque, that has its more bizarre realizations in Noto, but that has also many magnificent examples in Modica, Scicli, Ragusa Ibla, Siracusa and Catania.

Traditions during the Holy Week

The baroque was not only an artistic, architectonic style, but also the expression of strong religious belief and popular fallacy, that have been handed down until now.

As in the other regions that were strongly influenced by the Jesuit's culture, Easter time is particularly striking and full of events such as the Holy Week in Ragusa Ibla where during the week the processions follow one after the other in the wonderful frame of this county, Palm Sunday in Scicli, where the ancient Madonna della Pietà - found roughly in the year 1000 after being hidden for 3 centuries in order to preserve it from the Saracens – is taken from the Chiesa di Santa Maria la Nova to the Chiesa del Carmine and the solemn procession of the Madonna Vasa Vasa di Modica where a Madonna dressed in mourning meets the Jesus' statue in the piazza San Domenico and kisses him.

Where to stay

The best way to enjoy a holiday in complete freedom is to stay in an apartment or in a private villa in the city or in the vicinity of the town centres in the flourishing, Sicilian countryside. Not far from Modica is Villa Trombadore, a comfortable, patrician dwelling dating back to the end of the nineteenth century - situated along the road that leads to Ispica – that can accommodate up to twelve persons. For those who want to enjoy an unspoilt sea the best solution is Costa Bianca, a modern complex of vacation homes surrounded by an oasis of lush vegetation situated in the Plemmirio nature reserve, in the vicinity of

Siracusa. Whereas the authentic atmosphere of Ragusa's countryside can be experienced at the Parco Cavalonga, a resort situated in the middle of an 18-hectare nature park where three country houses of the estate, dating from the last century, have been converted into seven elegant, comfortable apartments. For those seeking further information Dicasainsicilia.com has plenty of accommodation in the eastern region of Sicily, among Siracusa, Modica and Ragusa. To book just send an email or call the 0039 0941 361681.

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