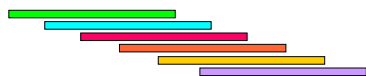


# *DrystoneRoutes*

Routes within the Cultural Landscape of Comprensorio Eloro  
South Eastern Sicily



**Città di Noto**  
Patrimonio dell'Umanità



**Iniziativa Co-finanziata dall'Unione Europea  
nell'ambito del programma Leader Plus - PSL "Eloro"**



CITTA' DI NOTO  
Agriculture Department

# *Drystone Routes*

Routes within the Cultural Landscape of Comprensorio Eoro  
South Eastern Sicily

*The project "Percorsi di Pietra" is co-financed by European Union  
Leader Plus Programme - PSL" Eoro"*

In the frontpage: Noto-San Corrado Fuori Le Mura-terraces

Photos by Paolo Tiralongo and Mariangela Gioacchini. The photos of the Route 6 have been kindly given by Antonello Capodicasa

Texts and researches by Mariangela Gioacchini and Maria Antonia Manetta

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# *Landscape of Stones*

*Color and light, flavors, strong and sweet, a nature that holds and clearly pronounces time with a forgotten rhythm: this is the essence of the Cultural Landscape of South-Eastern Sicily.*

*A land where the Stone emerges in all of its primitive force and comes out in a multitude of forms; simple rock, dry stone walls, rural dwellings, terraced towers or majestic baroque monuments. Softened in the curves, cut in the corners and recesses, the stone marks the landscape of the country-side and the iblean hills, far and near the coast. A Cultural Landscape where the stone separates and reunites the far and the near, the private dimension from the public and nature from man's works.*

*The Patrimony in Dry Stone of the Comprensorio Eloro, reminds us of the relationship with nature that gets lost with time. A Patrimony to be preserved and spread so as to get back rhythms, colors and scents rooted in the memory and in the customs of all the people of the Mediterranean.*

*The Routes of Stones that we have selected from the many possible in the Comprensorio Eloro, aim to be part of the discoveries in the Travels in Sicily. They are routes around and inside the patrimony of stone, to taste the strength and the sweetness of this land, far from well-worn paths where the landscape is a stream of visions and contrasting sentiments, a scene to discover and to live by oneself or in company, by car or on mountain bike and on foot.*

*Ours is an invitation to pass through the secret and uncontaminated soul of South Eastern Sicily, discovering, through unusual routes, the beauty of lingering and the contemplation of the landscapes of dry stone.*

*Our intention is also to unite two Sicilies: the baroque of the Val di Noto and that of the rural Iblean Mountains. One strikes us with its elegance and richness, the other for its discreet and never-invasive relationship with nature. The first expresses itself through marvelous architecture thought of by man, the other takes its philosophy and language from nature.*

*Pietre,  
Testimoni silenziose raccontano  
il tempo che fu  
il tempo che e'  
il tempo che sara'*

*Pietre, mani vigorose posero,  
a stratificare il tempo.  
Acuminate e pungenti,  
eppur armonicamente  
a contornare il mondo di collane*

*di Giuseppina Novello*

Route 1

## Landscape of Stones

From Noto to Noto Antica

Departing point: Noto

Arrival point: Noto

Length: 30 km

Mode of transport: by car, by mountain bike, with tracts on foot



San Corrado Fuori Mura - Terraces

### The Route

*The first route we propose, introduces us to the rolling, green, high plains that stretch from the small village of San Corrado Fuori le Mura , to the land of Noto Antica, running through the contrade of Villa Vela and Testa dell'Acqua. A strong genealogical line unites modern Noto with old Noto, a line that ties the grand villas of the 1800's, and the small church of San Corrado, all the way to the old settlement of Noto Antica. A trip that covers the landscape of the "stones of Noto".*



San Corrado Fuori Mura - Villa Peppina

## 2. SAN CORRADO FUORI MURA

Continuing on, we arrive to the residential center. Right after the sign that indicates the entrance to the village, on the left we can stop in the area of Belvedere di San Corrado Fuori Mura where it is possible to observe with tranquillity the vast terracing of one of the biggest villas, Villa Peppina. The antique villa, in 1800's style, raising just a few steps away, once solitarily rose above the surrounding hills. The terraces give rise in the first half of the 20th century; the use of the white limestone and the disposition of small stairways to facilitate maneuvering between levels are typical.

## 3. THE CHURCH OF SAN CORRADO

Having left the village, after about 1 km, to our left we find the signpost to get to the Church or Eremo of San Corrado. We go down to the Sanctuary immersed in the green of the Valley of Miracles. It is a very mysterious place, full of peace and silence. From the left of the space in front of the entrance, a small stairway dug out of the rock begins which leads to the surrounding residential area. Along the trail that leads to the Sanctuary, on the right, there are stairways in the rock that lead to the cave of San Corrado and to a second cave that is said to be of San Guglielmo. At the end of the trail the Sanctuary, built in 1749, emerges around a rocky canyon where the saint usually prayed.

## 1. TOWARDS THE IBLEAN HILLS

We leave from Piazza Marconi, in front of the public gardens, recognizable by the statue of San Corrado, the Patron Saint of Noto. We leave the city taking the SS 287 Noto-Palazzolo. After having passed the Hospital, the road becomes panoramic with curves and elbow bends that skirt the underlying canyon. To our left, as we continue, the first hills emerge where the natural rock mixes with the typical Mediterranean vegetation known as "macchia", there are uncountable dry stone terraces that were built to contain the landslides and to create sections of cultivatable land. This first landscape amazes with its perfect harmony between nature and man's intervention. As we get close to the village of San Corrado Fuori le Mura, a residential area started around the location where the Patron Saint of the city lived as a hermit; several "patrizia" villas exhibit between the more recent structures.

San Corrado F.M. - stairway dug out of the rock



#### 4. THE MANGER OF TESTA DELL'ACQUA

We get back onto the SS287 and pass the district of Villa Vela. After about 1 km we take a provincial road to left that leads to Testa Dell' Acqua. After another kilometer, an impressive estate, the Masseria Messina, stands out on our right. We stop for a rest. In the field, in front of the estate, as we walk along the walls of the property, we are able to see a rare example of a manger for animals. It is set in the internal section of a dry stonewall. The body of the wall has been carved out to hold the straw to feed the animals.



Contrada Testa dell'Acqua- the manger

#### 5. NOTO ANTICA

We continue on the provincial road in the direction of Testa Dell' Acqua, keeping to the left, until the intersection that signals Noto Antica. The road that takes us to the heart of Monte Alveria, is a real leap into the countryside built stone by stone. We have arrived at the archeological site of the city of Noto Antica, destroyed by a terrible earthquake in 1693. From the piazza or open space in front of the Porta della Montagna (door of the mountain), we reach the most important sites of the city on foot. The city, which was founded in 448 b.C., rises on Monte Alveria, a real and natural stronghold surrounded and protected by the lush canyons of the basin of the Asinaro River: Carosello (merry-go-round) Canyon, Durbo Canyon, and Salitello Canyon. From this ancient place we can admire the remains of the old city walls, the Royal Castle, the Porta della Montagna, the remains of the Greek Gymnasium and several churches.



Noto Antica - Door of the Mountain

#### 6. THE SANCTUARY OF THE MADONNA DELLA SCALA

Once we have left the site of Noto Antica we follow the small road that descends to the left. Along the rocky wall over head, just a few meters ahead we find two interesting catacombs: a Jewish catacomb called "The Cave of the Artichoke", a Byzantine catacomb called "The Cave of the hundred mouths". Continuing along, from the bridge of Salitello Canyon, it is possible to see a Sicilian necropolis from the VII century b.C. Continuing further, and just before we get back onto the road SS 287, which takes us back to Noto, we find the Sanctuary of La Madonna della Scala. From the Sanctuary we can admire the green landscape of the Passo del Bove and Piraro Canyon.



# Comune di Noto

Surface: 554 Km<sup>q</sup>

Altitude: m.80 s.l.m.

Populations: notinesi o netini

Phone code (0931)

Zip code: 96017

City Hall

P.zza Municipio

Tel. 0931896111

Numero verde: 800-99-44-62

Assessorato Turismo e Spettacolo

Piazza XVI Maggio

Tel.0931 896658/ 651 - Fax 931896661

Azienda Autonoma Provinciale per  
l'incremento Turistico

Ufficio informazioni turistiche A.A.P.I.T.

Piazza XVI Maggio Noto

Tel.0931573779 - Tel/Fax: 0931836744

Associazione turistica "Pro-Noto"

Via Gioberti, n.13

tel. e fax 0931836503

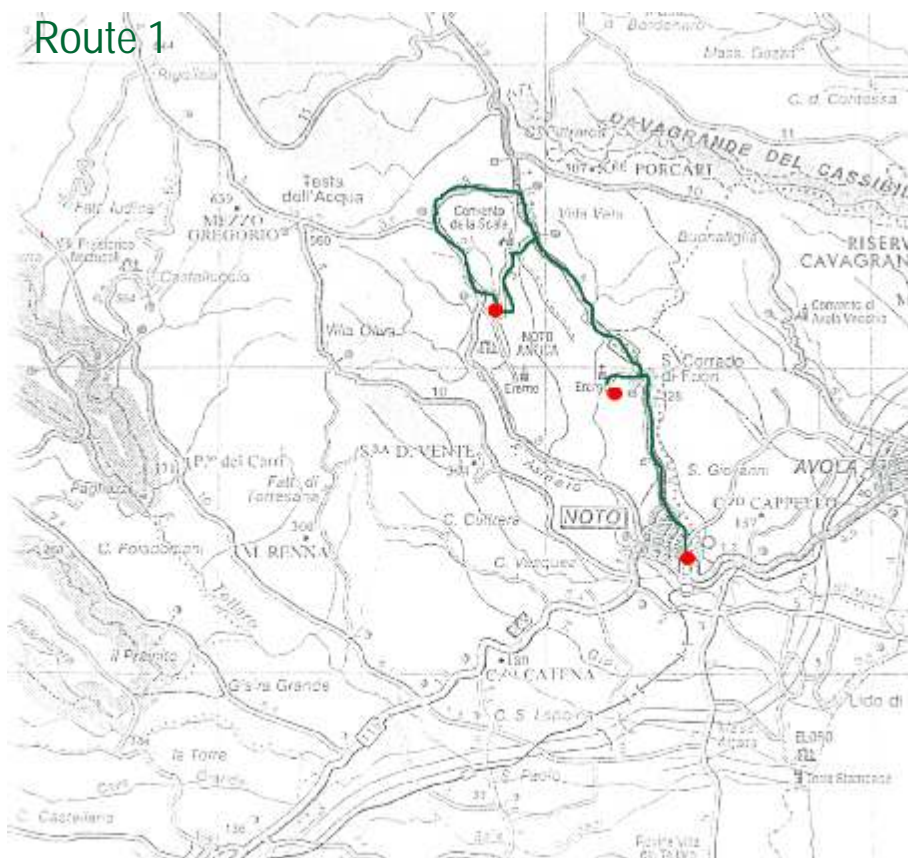
Polizia Municipale

Via Cavarra n. 7

Informazioni 0931 835668

Piantone 0931896500

FAX 0931896509



Route 2

## Bitter Sweet Scenery

Noto - Estate of Torresena - Case Granieri

Departure point: Noto

Arrival point: Noto

Length: about 45 km

Mode of transport: by car, by mountain bike, with tracts on foot



Contrada Serravento

### The Route

*This route lets us feel the strong tie between the cultural identity of the local population and the geological characteristics of the iblean countryside. It is a difficult land to work, having been conquered centimeter by centimeter, by the work of bonifying the fields. This land greets us between the hills and deep crevices that cut the iblean high plain like ancient wounds without time.*

## 1. THE PROVINCIAL ROAD SS 24 NOTO - TESTA DELL'ACQUA

We leave Noto in the direction of Ragusa taking the SS 115. After about half a km, we take the SP 24, on the right, towards Testa Dell'Acqua.

This first stretch introduces us to a land of bittersweet contrasts, hills that suddenly open in steep, deep canyons dug by the erosion of water.

After about 9 km Castello dell'Oliva, built in the beginning of the 1900's, rises in front of us. Just after the road sign that indicates the 19<sup>th</sup> km of the SP 24, we take the road to the left that becomes the SP 8.

The road becomes more narrow and windy. After about 1 km it opens out to a view of the South/West slope of the Iblean high plain. We find ourselves in front of the Basin of the Tellaro at the southern extremity of Sicily.



Terraces



Drystone walls of a farm's ruin

## 2. THE ESTATE OF TORRESENA

We go along for 1 km, watching carefully for road signs on the left that indicate the Necropolis of Finocchito. This sign is found at the entrance of a small dirt road. If we are in a car, we park under a carob tree, a bit further ahead, so as not to obstruct the way for others. Here we begin our adventure on foot. A typical small gate made of sticks and barbed wire normally closes the dirt road, but we can open it to pass being careful to close it behind us.

Going along the road we find ourselves immersed in the agricultural inland of Noto, between hills decorated with terraces of dry stonewalls, carobs and wild olives. Bonifying the land was necessary in order for it to be cultivated and these dry stone walls were built with the stones from the field.

After about 1.5 km we arrive at the Estate of Torresena, a beautiful example of rural Iblean architecture. Today, unfortunately, it is completely abandoned, only used by the shepherds. We leave the Estate and head back.

### 3. BITTER SWEET SCENERY

We continue to go along the SP8 in the direction of Contrada Renna. We leave behind a landscape with rocky walls, contrasting the hills cultivated with wheat and forage. Diverse colours and hues changing with the seasons.

As we arrive in the valley, in Contrada Renna, we pass the Astronomical Centre on our left and reach the SP 18, where we turn right. We go along a few km until we reach the turn for SP 98. We recognize it thanks to a red house on our right. Going up, we advance into the zone called Case Granieri that gets its name from the cultivation of wheat. Climbing further we notice that the road becomes more windy. A bittersweet landscape awaits us. In the middle of pine forest lined by newly built dry stonewalls, we are passing a zone that is being reforested by the Forestry Service. We arrive at the intersection that takes us to the SP 8 where we turn left. After just a few hundred meters we find ourselves on the SP 24 Noto - Testa Dell' Acqua.



Country road delimited by drystone walls



Contrada Granieri

## Useful numbers

Carabinieri: 112

Polizia: 113

Emergency number: 118

Vigili del Fuoco: 115

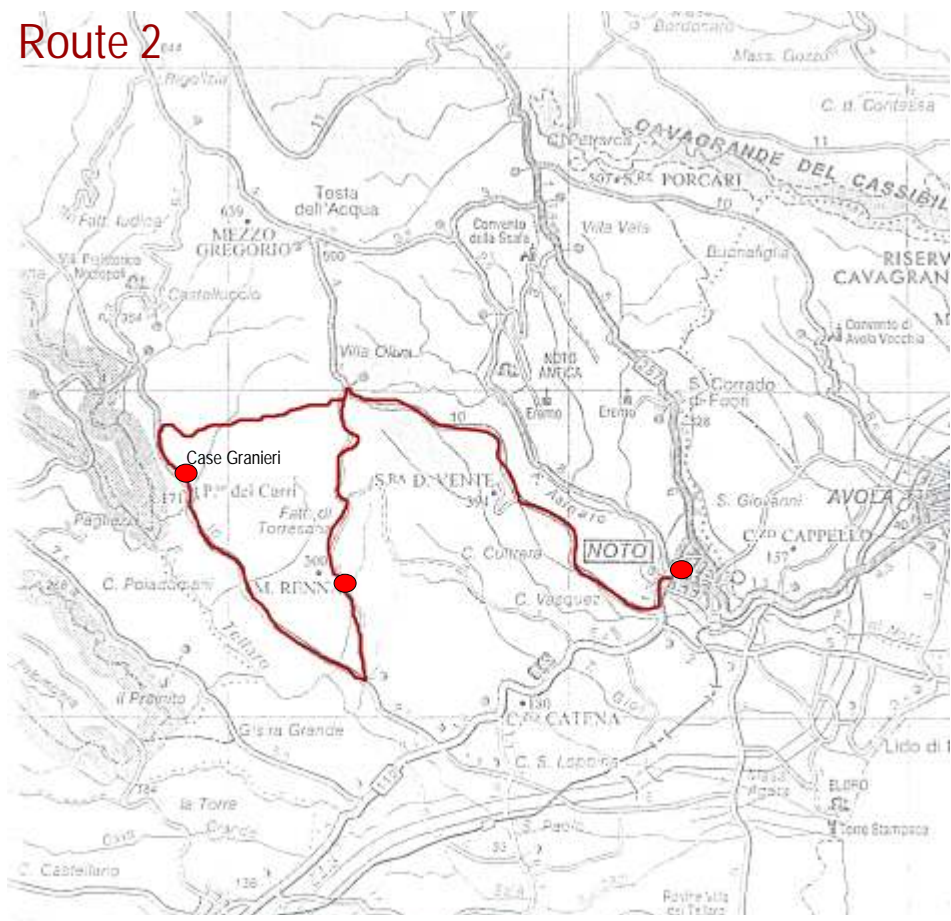
Corpo Forestale: 1515

Soccorso Stradale ACI: 803.116

Ospedale Avola: Tel. 0931 582226/582111

Ospedale Noto: Tel. 0931/ 890111 - Fax 0931/ 890334

## Route 2



## Route 3

# Landscape of unexpected geometry

From Noto to Castelluccio

Departure point: Noto

Arrival point: Noto

Length: about 45 km

Mode of transport: by car, by mountain bike with tracts on foot



Tellaro Valley

## The Route

*This Route takes us to the heart of one of the most evocative landscapes in the territory of Noto, the iblean hills, harsh and bare, where rock reigns, emerging from between the brush of wild herbs (thyme, wild fennel, nepitella, sage and rosemary). In this itinerary, after having crossed the hilly terrain of Testa Dell'Acqua, we approach the ancient civilization of Castelluccio.*

## 1. THE PROVINCIAL ROAD 24 NOTO - TESTA DELL' ACQUA

The itinerary begins in Noto, from the round about that indicates Corso Vittorio Emanuele, under the statue of the Madonna. We go in the direction of Ragusa, on the SS 115. After a few hundred metres we take the SP 24, to the right, towards Palazzo - Testa Dell' Acqua.

After having passed the Historical Cemetery of Noto, we find a countryside characterized by almond and olive trees. The most part of the SP 24 is lined on both sides by low stonewalls, some in good shape and some partly destroyed.

The road becomes steeper and after having passed Contrada Serravanto, a beautiful panoramic view of the hills that reign over Contrada Fiumara opens up for us on our right.

After a few curves we pass by a guard tower of the Forestry. Along the uphill climb, the landscape becomes harsher and the fields are drawn in unexpected geometric patterns by dry stonewalls.

To the right and to the left open up several dirt roads. Going along them we find many structures built in dry stone. These are old rural houses and refuges for shepherds and animals, most of them in ruins.

After about 7 km from the Forestry tower, we arrive in the tiny village of Testa Dell' Acqua, it is a small rural centre of 300 inhabitants. We stop for a rest by the fountain near the church.



Contrada Castelluccio

Cave of the Cyclops



## 2. THE NECROPOLIS OF CASTELLUCCIO

From Testa Dell'Acqua we go in the direction of Palazzolo. After about 4 km we find the turn for Castelluccio on our left. We then take the SP 81, being careful because the road becomes narrower. The panoramic view that opens up after about 3 km is breathtaking. The Valley of the Tellaro River stretches as far as the eye can see. We are entering into the archeological zone. The ancient, mysterious stone around us tell of their history.

Another 1.5 km downhill and a yellow sign indicates the entrance to the Necropolis of Castelluccio. The entrance has a green gate, which is almost always closed, but we can pass by its side. We park 100 metres ahead, in a space on the left, and then continue our tour on foot. This trail takes us to the heart of the archeological zone, where ancient human remains, with nearly 200 tombs carved out of the rock (1800-1400 b.C.), unite with the sight of the canyon of the Lady and its exceptional variety of flora and fauna.

### 3. THE CAVE OF THE SAINTS

From the parking spot, there starts another downhill trail that takes us to the Cave of the Saints. The cave, going back to Byzantine times, has a circular form with a pillar in the centre that holds up the ceiling. On the inside we find painted images from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> century a.C.



Cave of the Saints' painting

### 4. THE MONUMENTAL WALLS OF THE ANCIENT MEDIEVAL CASTLE

We slowly continue on the SP 81, for a few hundred metres. On the right, on a rocky spur, at a height of 350 metres, the megalithic walls of the Old Castle rise up made of great masses of limestone placed vertically and horizontally. These were part of the monumental walls that fenced in the medieval city. Under the walls we find a big space carved out of the rock called the Cave of the Cyclops.



The megalithic walls

### 5. THE VILLAGE OF CASTELLUCCIO

Continuing along, we arrive at the Village of the Marquis of Castelluccio, built in the second half of the 1800's by the old owners of the Castelluccio Feud, a monumental complex made up of the Palace of the Marquis, the church and the rural village.

We continue downhill always staying to the right, following indications for Noto, until we reach the SP 18, where we turn left. We go until we cross the SS 115 Noto-Rosolini, taking the road to the left, back to Noto.



## Transport useful numbers

Fontanarossa International Airport

Call center: +39 095 7239111

Flights info: + 39 095 340505

SAC: numero verde 800 605656

Bus Services

Autolinee Interbus

Terminal Catania: 095 530396 - 095 7461333

Terminal Siracusa: 0931 66710

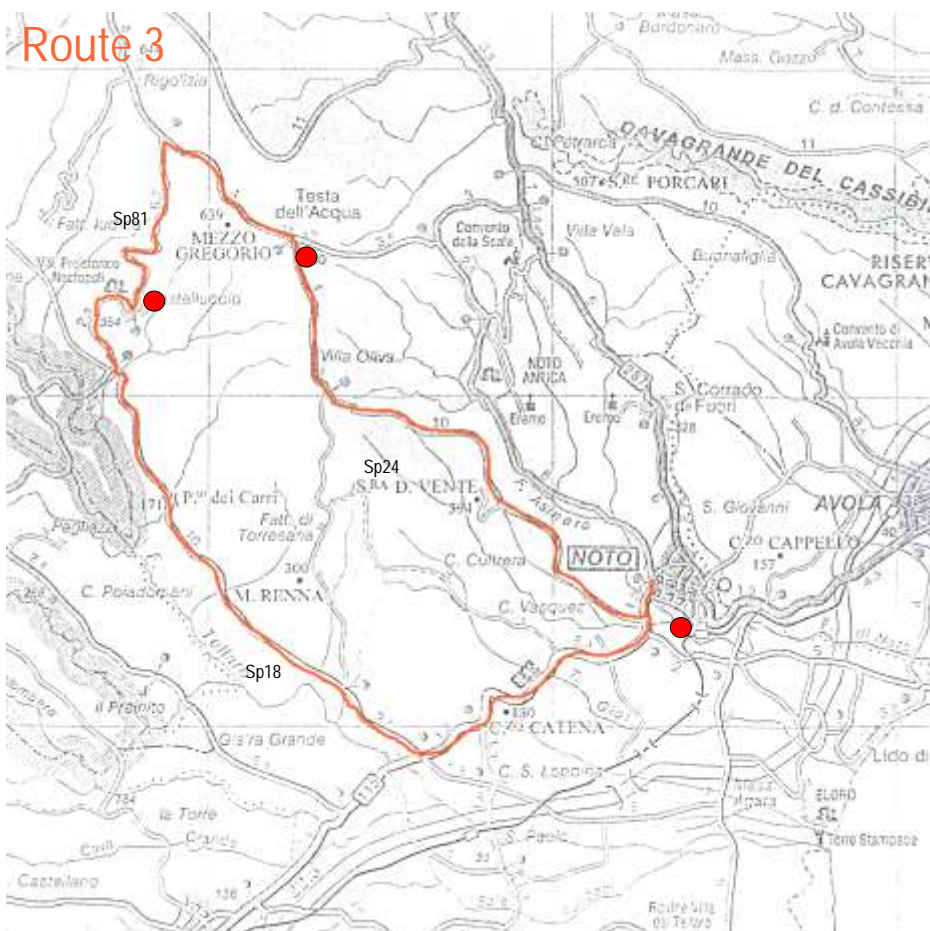
Autolinee Ast

Call Center: 840000323

Catania: 095 7461096

Siracusa: 0931 46480

da/per Messina 090.771914 (Autolinea Sais)



## Route 4

### Country of land and sea

From Avola to Cavagrande

Departure point: Avola

Arrival point: Cava Grande del Cassibile

Length: 12 km

Mode of transport: by car, by mountain bike, with tracts on foot



Avola Antica

#### The Route

*The route, that from the city of Avola, takes us up to Cava Grande del Cassibile, defines, more than the others, the double identity of the cultural landscape of the Comprehensive Eoro. Deep canyons and high cliffs dominate the coast, diving into the sea. In the course of time, man has interacted with this landscape, developing a culture tied to the sea and a rural culture tied to the land.*

## 1. THE SP 4 AVOLA-MANGHISI

We begin this tour from Piazza Umberto I, going to Piazza dei Cappuccini where we take Via Savonarola. When this street crosses the old road for Avola Antica, turn left. We cross the SS 115 and take the SP 4 Avola- Manghisi. As soon as we've left the city, the scenery that greets us on the base of the high cliffs of mount Aquilone, is rich with citrus orchards. There is an old aqueduct in stone on the right, a heritage of a time in which this zone bloomed with the cultivation of sugar cane. As we proceed, we notice the typical Mediterranean vegetation with some remaining wild pistachio.

We start ascending and we take a first break in the rest stop Belvedere on the right. From here we can admire the panoramic view of the southern coast, with the last cliffs of the iblean hills, completely terraced with dry stonewalls.



Terraces

Boundary wall



## 2. BENDS IN THE ROCK

The road to Avola Antica ascends steeply for about 8.5 km with a series of elbow bends up to the summit of Monte Aquilone. It runs along the high rock walls where we find several caves carved directly out of the stone. They are the remains of ancient cliff dwellings, used as homes and cisterns of the medieval village of Avola Antica that were destroyed in the earthquake of 1693. Between one curve and another, on the left, you can see a perfectly preserved hill, terraced in dry stone.

## 3. THE CAVE OF SANTA VENERA AND THE CASTLE

The entrance of the path that takes us to the door of the cave of Santa Venera, which at the moment is inaccessible to the public and closed with a green gate, gives us a place to stop with a beautiful view of Bugliola Canyon.

We skirt along the edge of Monte Aquilone, in front of the site named Castello a natural fortress, which was inhabited in the remote times of the Sicans, followed by the Siculi; on the summit there was the medieval castle. After having passed Monte Aquilone, there is a kiosk votive carved out of the rock.

#### 4. THE CONVENT OF THE “MADONNA DELLE GRAZIE”

Following along we find the Convent of the Madonna delle Grazie, on our right. It was rebuilt on the ancient foundation of the convent of the younger brothers of Cappuccini, which was destroyed in 1771. Take note of the small orchard just under the convent, completely lined with excellently built dry stonewalls.

#### 5. CAVA GRANDE DEL CASSIBILE

Once we've passed the residential zone of Noto Antica, we go along for about 1 km, to the intersection that indicates the natural reserve Cava Grande (Grand Canyon) of the Cassibile River. The departure point for a trail hike of Cava Grande is the Belvedere, presided over by the Forestry. If one wants to hike down the canyon, they must inform the Forestry before going.

Cava Grande is a deep split carved out by the Cassibile River, the ancient Cacyparis or Kakyparis. The canyon is deep 320 metres, running along 10 km and becomes 1.2 km at its widest where it joins the Passetti Canyon.



Cava Grande del Cassibile

From the entrance of Belvedere in order to get to the riverbed, we go along the trail that begins with the Scala Cruci, on foot. The bottom of the canyon is characterized by several natural basins, the so called “pots of the giants”, which are circular pools created by the erosion of water and stones carried along by the river, and connected by a series of small water falls.

The canyon is a reserve full of a variety of flora. In particular, the numerous species of orchids, oriental trees and oleander.

Since the Neolithic period, the natural defence system of the canyon has made it easier for humans to live. Hundreds of caves have been dug out of the rock, connected to one another by tunnels and stairs, still passable today. The first traces of settlement go back to the siculi peoples from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century b.C. One of the most important settlements is the Cave of the Briganti (bandits) and the Ddieri ( from the Arabic word meaning “house”).

## Comune di Avola

Surface: 74,26 kmq

Altitude: 40 mt

Population: avolesi

Phone code: (0931)

Zip code: 96012

City Hall

Via Mazzini n. 18- Centralino: 0931 583111

Assessorato Turismo e Spettacolo

C/o Palazzo Modica Via Milano -Tel. 0931 578515

Polizia Municipale

Via Mazzini n. 42 - Tel. 0931 583114-fax 0931583118

Numero Verde: 800894986

Associazine Pro Loco Avola

Via Ravenna n. 15 -Tel. 0931 823566

Route 4



## Route 5

### Landscape through time

From Rosolini to Contrada Ritillini

Departure point: Rosolini

Arrival point: Contrada Ritillini

Length: 30 km

Mode of Transport: by car, by mountain bike, with tracts on foot



Capanna ogivale

#### The Route

*This route introduces us to a very characteristic countryside, where the ancient and the modern, the near and the far, just like nature and man's intervention, brush against each other continuously. This tour into the Comprehensive Eoro gives us a new and different perception of time and of rural space.*

## 1. THE EREMO OF CROCE SANTA

We leave from piazza Garibaldi of Rosolini and go along the Via Santa Alessandra that leaves the town in the direction of Modica. Just after leaving Rosolini, we need to pay attention for a signpost that indicates the Eremo di Croce Santa. We go down that road, which is pretty uneven, which brings us into the Canyon between dry stonewalls and the typical plants of the region, "macchia Mediterranean". We pass under the big arch of an old aqueduct and arrive in a parking space right in front of the Eremo of Croce Santa, made up of three churches built into the rock. Inside one of these three we can see beautiful frescoes from the Byzantine tradition.



Eremo Croce Santa

To the right of the Eremo a path begins with a sign indicating the "Oasis of the Donkeys". We take this path, and just before reaching the oasis, we turn left. After about a hundred meters, we find ourselves in front of a hill.

Here is a rare example of architecture in dry stone, the only one of its kind, found in the Iblean zone, up to now: a hut built in dry stone in an OGIVALE shape, standing right next to the remains of a manger and a freestanding stairway.



Hut built in dry stone in an ogivale shape

## 2. COSTONE STAFENNA

Going out of the Eremo of Croce Santa, we go back towards Rosolini and staying to the right, we follow the signs posted for the SS 115, which we find after about 5 km. At the intersection of the SS 115 we turn left towards Noto. Having passed the residential area of Rosolini, on our right, the "Costone della Stafenna" stands out. A low, ample, flat limestone along which we begin to notice from a distance the signs of various human settlements that have succeeded one another in the millennia, from prehistoric to medieval times.

After 2 km, there is an intersection, on our right with a sign indicating the fish farm "Macrostigma". We park in a grassy space by the side of the road and continue on foot for about 150 meters. Having arrived at the entrance of the fish farm, we turn to take a slightly downhill path that's in front of us, between wild plants and rock and in a few meters we find ourselves under the cliff in front of a Byzantine church dug out of the rock, used by shepherds as a stall. There is a fenced in area in dry stone, on the outside, which was used as a pigpen, now abandoned for many years.

### 3. LA FAVAROTTA

We return to the SS 115 and after about 300 mt we turn left onto the SP 17- Favorotta Ritillini, following the signs for Modica Frigintini. The word Favarotta comes from Arabic "al fawar" meaning "the spring", probably named for the rich and plentiful canyons, full of water, in this comes zone. As we proceed on this road, little by little, the shape of the countryside becomes more and more striking and fascinating. This road is a continuous stream of ancient farms, perfectly preserved, dry stonewalls, carob and olive trees, fields of wheat and forage.



Country road- SP Favarotta

### 4. PARADISE CANYON

Having arrived at the height of Agriturismo Paradise, we park and turn back a few metres to take the partly paved path that takes us into the canyon where the freshness of a rich, spontaneous vegetation greets us with poplars and white willows and the music of the water, playing in the stream Prainito. This is a true corner of paradise, timeless.



Costone Stafenna

### 5. LANDSCAPE THROUGH TIME

The SP 17, called the Favarotta, represents one of the most suggestive collections of dry stonewalls in the whole of Eloro. In particular, there are two parallel walls visible on our left, distant only a few metres from each other and perfectly kept. Closed in, in the middle, there are secular olive and carob trees. Continuing along the tour, a road lined with dry stonewalls, on our left, leads to an estate on a small hill. In the field, to the right, there is a massive, lone carob tree deserving of a photo.

We have arrived in the zone of the oil presses, the "trappito or frantoio" (presses); they open in October for the olive harvest. We are in Contrada Ritillini, where the territory of Rosolini ends and that of the Province of Ragusa begins.



# Comune di Rosolini

Surface: 76,15 kmq

Altitude: 154 mt

Population: rosolinesi

Phone code: (0931)

Zip code: 96019

City Hall

Via Roma n. 2

Tel. 0931 500111 fax 0931 501563

Assessorato Turismo e Spettacolo

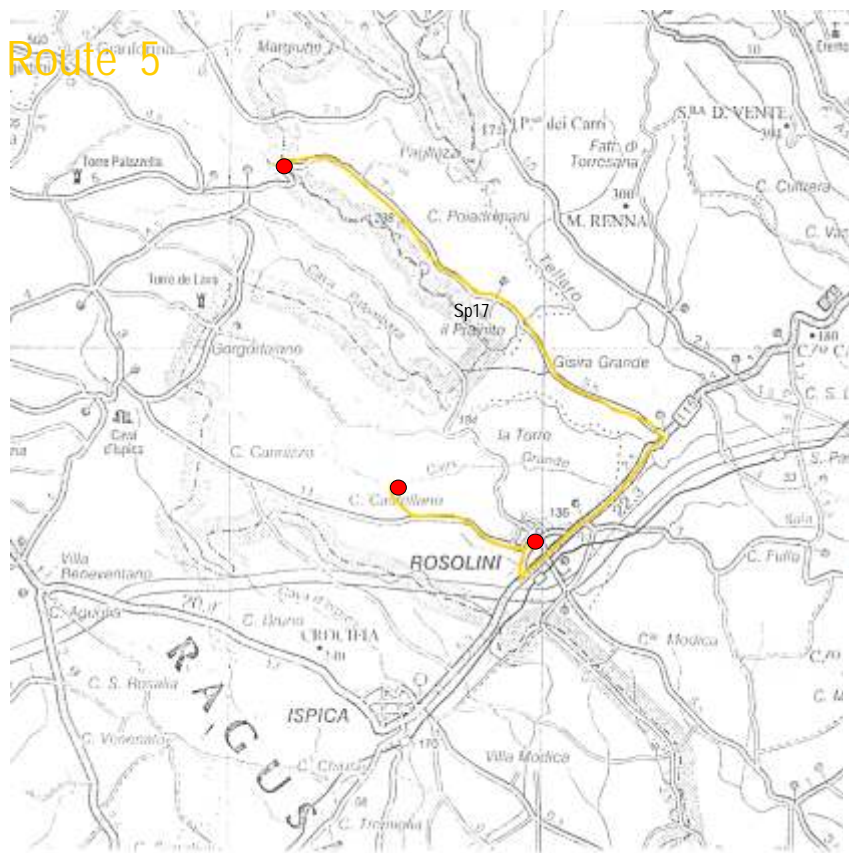
Via Manzoni 96/B

Tel. 0931 500488

Polizia Municipale

Via dei Gigli 1

Tel. 0931 500216



Route 6

## Scenery of a frontier

From Pachino to Portopalo of Capopassero

Departure point: Pachino

Arrival point: Pachino

Length: 30 km

Mode of transport: by car, by mountain bike, with tracts on foot



Contrada Cugni - boundary wall

### The Route

*Between the Jonio Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, in front of the African coast, the last edge of land of the Comprehensive South offers a frontier route between land and sea, the past and the future, antique and modern; a bridge, suspended between the cultures yet to be discovered and valued before it's too late.*

## 1. TOWARD THE SEA: THE MORGHELLA BOG

We leave from Piazza Vittorio Emanuele in Pachino and take Via Anita in the direction of Portopalo. We leave the residential area, passing in front of the old railway station (Via Nenni) in order to get to the SP 21. After about 500 meters, we find the intersection with the sign for the SP 97, Pachino MorgHELLa, on the left. We take the SP 97 for 2.5 km. The MargHELLa Bog, an old salt field used since the 1500's, stretches out on the right. When the Sp 97 reaches the sea-side road, Marzamemi-Portopalo, we turn left.

## 2. CALAFARINA CAVE AND CONTRADA CUGNI

After having gone about 2 km, there is a sign for La Grotta di Calafarina (Calafarina Cave) on our left. We park on the side of the entrance and take the small dirt road on foot. After just a few meters we find Calafarina Cave. Inside the cave, remains, going back to the 7<sup>th</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> millennium b.c., have been found along with Greek, Roman and Byzantine relics. We move along a few meters and face the so-called 'Cugni Area' on our left. It is an archaeological area characterized by a necropolis from the Bronze Age (4<sup>th</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> millenium b.c.) and a village from the greek-roman epic. A very long dry-stone wall runs along the whole zone, losing itself in the distance.

## 3. TOWARDS PORTOPALO: THE CANNERY, MANDRIE LANDING AND CONTRADA CICOGNA (STORK DISTRICT)

We get back on the sea-front road going back toward Portopalo of Capo Passero.

After 3.5 km, we find the Cannery of Capo Passero rising up over the sea. It was built between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Today the Cannery is the property of the Bruno of Belmonte Family. When the gate is open, one can go in for a visit. Right after the Cannery, the Tafuri Castle, built in modern times, tells us that we are approaching Portopalo. At the intersection, we take the road that goes down to the left and after a few hundred metres we can park in front of the *Terrazza dei Due Mari* (Terrace of two seas); called this because this is the place where the Jonio Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, meet.



Contrada Cugni - boundary wall



Scalo Mandrie - Paleochristian catacombs

We have arrived at the so-called Mandrie Landing, where a paleochristian catacomb from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century a.d. was discovered at the small beach to the right of the Terrazza dei Due Mari. Notice the circular pools embedded in the rock; they are the remains of a system for processing fish where a sauce, much loved by the Romans, called *Garum*, made from salted, marinated fish entrails, was prepared. From this small beach a trail begins ( still under going works, but will be usable soon), that runs along the coast to the Contrada Cicogna (Stork District).

The route, entirely lined by dry-stone walls, offers us a mystic passage between sea and history, right in front of the Island of Capo Passero, where the majestic fortress of Carlo V of Germany, king of Spain, was built at the end of the 1500's against the raids.

#### 4. FROM PORTOPALO OF CAPOPASSERO TO PACHINO: COZZO SPADARO LIGHTHOUSE, TORRE FANO AND COZZO SANTA LUCIA

From Mandria Landing, we enter the city of Portopalo, going along Via Vittorio Emanuele. We arrive at the Church of San Gaetano, whose bell tower has the outline of a swordfish, the traditional symbol of this sea-faring town. Right after the church, we take a right and following the signs for Pachino, we find ourselves on the SP 21 right under the Cozzo Spadaro Lighthouse, built in the second half of the 1800's. After 1.5 km in the direction of Pachino, there is a road to the right with a sign for Torre Fano and Belvedere of the Two Seas.



Cozzo Santa Lucia - dry lavastone wall

The two sites deserve a quick deviation and allow us to admire the panoramic view of the coast and the remains of Torre Fano, an old watch tower. Originally 10 metres high, it already existed in the 1500's. Getting closer to Pachino, a small hill in a cone shape, stands out on our right. It is the Cozzo Santa Lucia. In reality it is a volcanic cone, whose volcanic activity goes back to 80 million years ago. A short stretch of dry-stone wall that we find on our right just after the Cemetery, built with lava stone, now almost completely covered by cactus, testifies its existence.



Torre Xibini - Pachino

#### 5. INLAND AND THE TORRE XIBINI

Pachino and Portopalo are not only known for their sea-faring culture, but are also known for a rich agricultural economy that has developed inland. Today, in the whole zone, they produce and export greenhouse-grown fruits and vegetables .in the whole world, including the Pachino Cherry Tomato and Cantaloupe Melon. As a testimony of the local agricultural tradition, along the Via Maucini just a few km away from Pachino, we find the ruins of Torre Xibini, built in 1494 to defend the Feudal property of the Sortino di Noto Family, colonized at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century b.c.

## Comune di Portopalo

Surface: 14,87 Km<sup>q</sup>  
Altitude: m.20 s.l.m.  
Population: portopalesi  
Phone code: (0931)  
Zip code: 96010  
City Hall  
Via L. Tasca n. 33  
Tel. 0931 848011 fax 0931 842879  
Assessorato Turismo e Spettacolo  
Tel. 0931 848019  
Polizia Municipale  
Tel. 0931 848015 842687  
Associazione Pro Loco di Portopalo  
Via F. Garrano 9  
Tel.cell. 333 6335052

## Comune di Pachino

Surface: 50,47 km<sup>q</sup>  
Altitude: 65 mt  
Population: pachinesi  
Phone code: (0931)  
Zip code: 96018  
City Hall  
Via XXV Luglio  
Tel. 0931 803111 fax 0931 803123  
Numero Verde 800 015678  
Assessorato Turismo e Spettacolo  
Tel. 0931 803259 0931 803258  
Polizia Municipale  
Tel. 0931 803409 fax 0931 803404  
Associazione Pro Loco Pachino  
Corso Nunzio Costa n. 87  
Cell. 348 9327174

## Route 6



## THE RESOURCES OF THE AGRICULTURAL TERRITORY

Noto is a city full of traditions. In the course of time, every civilization that has lived there, every population that has inhabited its territory, has left a deep mark on its culture and customs. If we go along the roads that go up to the hills of Saccolino, Tremeaiali, Renna Alta, Torresena, Castelluccio and Oliva, and come back down to the valley towards the district of Serra del Vento, Busulmone, Zisola, Gioi and Bufalefi, we find a landscape full of olive, almond and carob trees along with lines of grape vines and citrus orchards. Wherever we go, we are aware of the presence of the sea that never leaves us, like an old friend that's there to remind us of the geographical belonging of one of the most beautiful islands on the planet due to its nature and history.

At times the rural landscape is interrupted by a building, isolated or not, that preserves its fascination because of its uniqueness in the surrounding agricultural context. They are old villas, farms that open up through lime stone arches surrounded by stone wall terraces. These buildings, works of man, tell us about the life of the farmers long ago. Shacks and refuges, stalls, oil presses or small mills built beside landowners' houses, tell us that the territory was strongly tied to family-run agricultural production.

Thanks to the work of generations of farmers and colonists, that worked in historical and climatically difficult conditions, that today just as yesterday, this land offers products of good quality that are present everyday on our tables, representing the primary economic source of the territory.

The large variety of agricultural products from medieval times to the present are the main evidence of the enogastronomic riches that are fully expressed by the numerous recipes eaten in homes, convents and restaurants. We're talking about recipes such as "u cunigghiu a stimpirata" (rabbit in sweet and sour sauce), "a lietina" (a gelatine prepared with pork), "le scacce" and "usfinciuni", "à ghiotta" (vegetable stir-fry), the pasta "cu maccu" (homemade pasta with broad bean puree and wild fennel) that are on all menus in trattorias and traditional restaurants.

The big variety of agricultural products originates from the abundant ground water supply and the pedoclimatic characteristics of the volcanic and clay terrain. All of these elements make "agro netino" (rural Noto) a perfect terrain for cultivating grains, citrus fruits, almonds, olives and carobs which are the true queens of the Mediterranean culture.

Here is a overview of some of the products most appreciated and exported in the whole world: the tomato of Pachino or cherry tomato, originated in Israel in the 80's but found the right kind of brackish terrain needed to exalt its flavours in Pachino and Portopalo, the almond of Avola or pizzuta, the grape nero d' Avola or calabria, a main ingredient of the wine Doc Eloro, DocMoscato of Noto and the oil Dop of the Iblean Mountains.

Alongside these products many micro productions are developed: honeys, products made with olives and carobs, capers, derivatives of fish, snails, lemons, figs and prickly pears. Everything can be found in this marvellous "Valley of Eden" where nature has wanted and known how to show all of its generosity.

Dr. Corrado Casto  
Resp Project "Percorsi di Pietra"  
Dir. Serv Programmazione Economica and sportello alle imprese

In the frontpage: Noto-San Corrado Fuori Le Mura-terraces

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