

Lesson Four: Zoom in on Italy

Factsheet on Palermo

Name in Italian: Palermo

Region located in: Sicilia (Sicily)

Population: 680,000

Historical background

The first settlers in Palermo may have arrived in 8000 BC. Palermo proved an ideal location for invaders to conquer because of its being on a coastline. Because of this, many groups of people have invaded Palermo, in order to conquer the island of Sicily and to travel northwards through Italy to extend their development. These groups include the Romans, Greeks, Islamic Empire and Normans. This means that Palermo has a mix of cultures and styles in its architecture and this makes it a special city to visit. Palermo was hit hard during World War 2 and much of the city was destroyed during air raids.

Most famous tourist sights

There are many special places to visit in Palermo's city as well as the beaches of course, which can be found to the north of the city. These sites include Via Vittorio Emanuele, the Cathedral (Duomo), Pretoria Fountain, Vucciria Market, Massimo Theatre and the Catacombs.

City economics

The economic stability of Palermo is extremely important as the city supports the entire island of Sicily. The service industry is very important for the city. However, the biggest economy for Palermo comes from agriculture (farming) and fishing. Products from Palermo are transported all over Italy and are very popular. Palermo's port is also very important for trade and for bringing tourists into the city and the surrounding area.

Other information

Sicily is famous for its sweets and deserts and these can all be found in Palermo. One of the most famous is the Cannoli – this is a cone filled with ricotta cheese which is then deep fried.