

# Pantelleria

**P**antelleria, the Mediterranean black pearl, the biggest of the islands that surrounds Sicily, is situated in the middle of the homonymous channel, about half way between this and African continent.

It extends for 83 sq. km. and reaches its maximum height in the middle, where the **Montagna Grande** rises, 836 mt high above sea level. The morphology of its territory is rather complex: in fact the Island originates from several volcanic phenomenons followed and superimposed one upon another in time.

All the land lengthening from north-east to south-west is rather rocky and falls sheer to the sea. The north-western part instead is more level and hilly.

The particularity of the island just resides in the variety of its landscapes. Surrounded by **crystalline sea** and very coloured depths, it gathers in its interior a rather rough territory, where nevertheless man succeeded in cultivating the wine, and a **Natural Oriented Reserve** extending from the centre of the island to the coast.

The volcanic origin of Pantelleria explains the spectacular columns of steam you might see get out from the many clefts opening in the rock: they are the so-called "**Favare**". The same origin have the natural saunas, the so-called "**Stufe**", where the steam emanations reach very high temperatures. Among the several springs of thermal waters present on the island, the most important is the Specchio di Venere (Venus mirror).

**The History** - Since the Neolithic, the Island was inhabited by people probably coming from Tunisia. Since that age Pantelleria was a place of particular importance for the abounding presence of **obsidian**, the most used material of prehistory. Some funerary monuments date back to this period. In the VII century B.C. it was colonized by **Phoenicians** that used it for trades as a bridge between Africa and Sicily.



Contested during the **Punic Wars**, it was then conquered by Romans, by Byzantines and, in the VIII century, by Arabs that called it "**Bent el Rion - Daughter of the wind**". The long Arab domination leaved deep marks on language, customs, and traditions of the island. Also the construction of the **Dammusi**, the Pantelleria typical lava stone houses with dome-shaped roof, is due to them.

Since then, Pantelleria fated the whole Sicily. Because of its strategic position in Mediterranean Sea, during the II world war, suffered a heavy bombing that destroyed the most of built-up area.

## How to reach it

**By sea** - from Trapani [www.siremar.it](http://www.siremar.it), [www.usticalines.it](http://www.usticalines.it) and [www.traghettidelleisole.it](http://www.traghettidelleisole.it). From Mazara del Vallo [www.usticalines.it](http://www.usticalines.it)

**By plane** - Several companies manages flights to Pantelleria from the most important Italian airports. Look for the nearest to you !

## Useful Information and Numbers

**CAP** 91017

**Prefisso telefonico** (+39) 0923

**Comune** 0923 695011 [www.comunepantelleria.it](http://www.comunepantelleria.it)

**Ospedale** "B Nagar" 0923 910111

**Ufficio Turistico** 0923 695039

**Aeroporto** 0923 911172

**Capitaneria di Porto** 0923 911027

**Emergenza in mare** 1530

**Polizia** 113 / 0923 912705

**Carabinieri** 112 / 0923 911109

**Vigili del Fuoco** 0923 911831

**Forestale** 0923 916524

**Emergenza per l'ambiente** 1530

**Biglietteria Siremar** [www.siremar.it](http://www.siremar.it)

**Biglietteria Ustica Lines** 0923 911502  
[www.usticalines.it](http://www.usticalines.it)

**Proloco** - Piazza Cavour, 1 - Tel/Fax 0923.911838 / 695011 - [proloco@pantelleria.it](mailto:proloco@pantelleria.it)

# Cosa vedere

The province of **Trapani** there is an island more close to Africa rather than to Sicily, a paradise of colors, flavors and fragrances, with harsh and strong landscapes.

It is wonderful particularly for the contrast between the colors and atmospheres: you can admire the green of the valleys and the vineyards, the blue of the limpid sea, the anthracite of the lava flows, the gold of the **zibibbo** grapes, the white of the **dammusi** and the azure of the sky that close in on everything.



There are many paradisiac coves, jets of steam and hot springs confirming its volcanic origin, and the **Mirror of Venus**, a lake whose name is already very fascinating. There are also many vineyards that goodness knows why people have always preferred to fishing. The dammusi, a characteristic building of the island, attests to the presence of Arabs there. They are quadrangular with a domed roof and very thick walls to protect from the sunrays.



The center of town is quite different from compared with how it was in the past because of the heavy bombing during the last world war. But the island is very large and one kilometer beyond... it seems to be in another world !

The Reserve cover the area from the center of the island where there is the **Montagna Grande** to the coast. The main relief is surrounded by smaller volcanic rises, the so-called "**cuddie**". Thanks to them Pantelleria now exist. The variety of the environment derives from the overlapping of several lava flows in different times.



The northern area derived from the volcanic eruption more recent, as a matter of fact it is made of fluid lava flows. This is also the reason why reason the landscape is characterised by uniform slopes with few volcanic cones here and there.

The centre-northern area is characterised by a kind of natural beauty farm thanks to the **Mirror of Venus** with its sulphureous mud and a lot of hot springs. There are a lot of things to see, to experience, to eat on the island. There are innumerable magnificent landscapes. Here in the past centuries many men and different cultures lived and left traces of them that arrived until us.

You can visit the **Neolithic graves** of those people who came from Tunisia and the **Balata dei Turchi** where were defeated some pirates, and much more. The names of the contrade (quarters) come from Arabic. Goodness knows which one is the memory that each tourist keeps in his mind after visiting a place like that, so far away from the rest of the world !

## Flora

The vegetation of Pantelleria consists of 600 different species. You can find the Ilex, the Lentisk, the Cluster-pine, the red berries of the Strawberry-tree and the dark ones of the Myrtle, the Phillyrea, an evergreen shrub with a very strong scent, the Rue, one meter and

a half high evergreen shrub, the Cistus with common pink flowers, the Erica Arborea e Multiflora with a upright shaft, the Oleaster and the smelling Rosemary. Two varieties of Limonium (cosyrense and parviflorium), the Helicrysum ererae, a perennial bush that grows also in dry and steep soils, and the Medicago truncatula var. cosyrensis belonging to the leguminous family are some of the endemic species of the territory.



## Fauna

Thanks to its special position between Africa and Sicily, Pantelleria is an ideal leg for all the species of migratory birds that move between Europe and Africa. There you can find the rare Eleonora's Falcon, a very elegant bird of prey with a red feathering, the Black kite, a bird of prey flying very high, the Buzzard with broad wings and a variegated plumage, the Thrush, a small passerine bird, the Woodcock, the Turtledove, the Kestrel and the Peregrin.

The Mirror of Venus is frequented by a lot of water fowls such as Ducks, Limicolous, different species of Herons and Flamingos. Sometimes you can also find Great crested grebe, Cranes, Storks and Spoonbill, recognizable by their peculiar peak. The Blue tit is an endemic species of the island. You can see it near the Montagna Grande.

The most characteristic animal of the island is the Donkey of Pantelleria that comes from crossbreeds between African and Sicilian breeds. It is a tireless worker, sought-after for its strength, longevity, walking speed and balance even in the more impassable paths.



# The Map

