

## **Route 14**

- **Tour:** Selinus
- **Starting point:** San Vito
- **Arrival:** Agrigento
- **Points of interest:** Riserva naturale dello Zingaro - Selinunte - Valle dei Templi
- **Km:** 91



Leave from San Vito and drive south to visit the archaeological Greek remains in Segesta, Selinunte and Eraclea.

### ■ **History and traditions:**

San Vito lo Capo is famous to be a seaside town and its coast is splendid and opens into a bay which extends from S. Vito to the cape of Solanto, at the foot of mount Monaco.

Here you can find a tuna station that is inactive since 1600. The place was visited by pilgrims devoted to St. Vito, where there is a sanctuary dedicated to him. It was erected in the XIII century on an old chapel and was fortified in 1545.

There are many towers in this place, raised to signal the presence of hostile boats, such as Impiso's, Torrazzo's, Sceri's, Roccazzo's and also Isolidda's.

#### Selinunte

According to the Athenian historian Thucydides, Selinunte was founded by people from Megara Hyblaea, a city on the east coast of Sicily, in the 7th century BC. The city had a very short life (about 200 years). During this time its population grew to a total of about 25,000. A wealthy trade center, Selinunte was envied by the Carthaginians. Selinunte had an almost permanent conflict with Segesta, which allied itself with Athens. However, the Athenians were defeated by the Syracusans, and Segesta now asked help from Carthage. Diodorus Siculus tells that the Carthaginian commander Hannibal (not to be confused with his more famous namesake), in 409 BC destroyed Selinunte after a war that counted about 16,000 deaths and 5,000 prisoners. The city was besieged for nine days by an army of 100,000 Carthaginians.

#### Agrigento

The Valley of the Temples rises southernmost, on the traces of the old town and includes many temples built in the 5th century BC.

Walking along the path you can find:

- The temple of Concorde; the only temple still standing in its whole.

- The temple of Castor and Pollux; tributed to Leda and Zeus's twins.
- The temple of Olympian Zeus
- was built in the 5th century BC and dedicated to Zeus
- The temple of Heracles; was built to commemorate the soldiers died during the Second Punic War.
- The temple of Hera Lacinia (Giunone)

#### ■ Food and wine:

In St. Vito every year, in September, takes place the "Festival of couscous". Many Sicilian, Egyptian, Palestinian, Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian chefs take part to the competition in preparing this special dish. The competition concludes with the public tasting of couscous.

#### ■ Sightseeing and Landscape:

The Natural Reserve of the Zingaro is situated in the extremity of the tyrrhenian west coast of Sicily and it is the continuity of the set of calcareous reliefs of the Mesozoic origin in the Palermo area, near to Mount Cofano. In the reserve, the general climate indicated for the vegetation has an average temperature of 19° C and a rainfall capacity of 645 mm. Also when it doesn't rain, often there are on the mountains beneficial fog banks that come from the sea and that maintain local damp microclimates.

##### Selinunte

Selinunte is an ancient Greek archaeological site in the south province of Trapani, in the island of Sicily. Selinunte is the modern Italian name for the ancient Selinus.

The archaeological site contains five temples centered on an acropolis.

##### Agrigento

Its origins are very ancient and notably Agrigento still offers the enchanting view of a presumedly sacred area built when Greeks landed there to start the civilisation of Magna Graecia.

The remains include some temples, in strategic position on the peak of several hills around the town, dominating the valley (famous as the Valle dei Templi "Valley of temples"). The valley is known for the springtime event where the pervasive yet pleasant scent of orange flowers (locally called zagare).

In a poor village close to Agrigento, the Contrada Xaos (which means Chaos), was born perhaps the most famous Italian dramatist, Luigi Pirandello.

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