



Provincia di
Trapani

Vita



Welcome





Vita is...

Vita, Valley of the Murals is a small centre of a predominantly agricultural vocation, where fine wines and oils are produced. The town, founded in the early seventeenth century by baron Vito Sicomo from whom it took its name, presents vast cultivated fields. On the summit of mount Barononia, the wood of the same name stands, a

large green space of important naturalistic interest. Here it is possible to go on pleasant excursions enjoying relaxing moments, in a healthy air and to enjoy splendid views over the surrounding countryside. Vita is also famous for its traditions: for San Giuseppe (Saint Joseph), votive altars are set up, decorated with symbolic

bread; on Ascension day, the *Madonna di Tagliavia* is celebrated by the population with heartfelt festivities: from the decorated wagons which parade through the streets of the town in a magical and suggestive atmosphere, local products like wine, olives and *cucciddati*, characteristic hard round bread rolls are thrown.

Urban landscape



Madonna di Tagliavia festivity



Barononia Wood





History

The town was founded on the initiative of baron Vito Sicomo who, in 1607, obtained the *ius populandi* from king Filippo III of Aragona, and it took its name from its founder. In 1848 the inhabitants participated in the revolutionary uprisings and in 1860 offered valid logistic support to Garibaldi's army; a squad of "*picciotti*" (youths)

from Vita were by Garibaldi's side in the battle of Pianto Romano. In the more recent history of the town, the migratory flow at the beginning of the XX century was important; many inhabitants of Vita emigrated to northern Italy and abroad, above all in Canada where, in Toronto there is a community. The earthquake of 1968 radically

changed the town, not only due to the damage provoked but also due to the social, cultural and building changes. Vita lost its most significant monuments: the Mother Church and the *palazzo baronale* (baronial palace). The reconstruction of the town was carried out in a neighbouring area to the old urban centre in Giudea district.

Historic centre



Vito Sicomo



Giuseppe Garibaldi





Landscape

Extraordinary relicts of an ancient wood of *Quercus virgiliana* (chestnut oak) with its floristic accompaniment, present along the road from Calatafimi to Vita, show the history of this hilly landscape in which cultivations of olive groves and vines follow the gentle curves of the levels moving

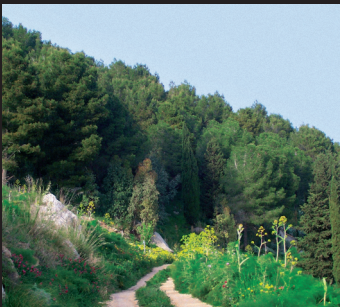
up as far as the Bosco della Baronìa (Baronia Wood), allowing the discovery of Mount Polizzo, the town of Vita and the state lands of Montagna Grande. The Baronia wood dominates the context. It is well looked after and well equipped and offers spaces for picnics; traces of ancient

niviere, rare indications of the unusual and ancient commerce of ice; marvellous panoramic views over the provinces of Trapani and Palermo. In addition, the view over the temple of Segesta, the obelisk of Pianto Romano and the castle of Salemi is incredible.

Baronia Wood



Baronia Wood



Countryside of Vita



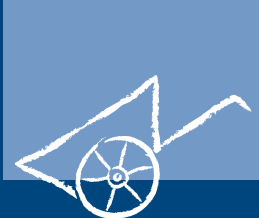


Nature

The reappearance of downy oaks and holm oaks, species of oak which are typical to the Mediterranean, is traceable to the original wood which covered the top of mount Baronia. The current wood, managed by the Azienda Forestale, today covers around 100 hectares and reaches an altitude of 630m above sea level, with an equipped area with 4 cooking points and seating for 60. Inside the wood, which is predominantly coniferous with trees belonging to the *Pinus*, *Cedrus*, *Cupressus* species and where there is also the presence of *Robinias* characterised by quick growth, strips of ancient downy oak wood with

the relative floristic accompaniment still exist. In fact on the sides of the provincial road leading from Calatafimi to Vita one can admire impressive specimens of *Quercus virgiliana* (chestnut oak). In addition to the oak, in these formations there are also *Rosa canina*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Daphne laureola*, *Prunus spinosa*, *Rubus ulmifolius*, *Calicotome infesta*, *Asparagus acutifolius*, *Ruscus aculeatus*, *Cytisus villosus*, *Lonicera etrusca*, *Erica arborea*, making up the shrub layer. Between the branches one can observe the jay, a small corvid with a pink coloured body and a white back, a long black tail and white and light blue wings,

of a shy temperament, but which reveals its presence with its raucous song. Where the conditions of the earth are harsher, there are vegetation formations made up of aromatic essences, including thyme, savory, oregano and wild fennel, which are able to grow on rocky sub layers, sometimes with no earth. The garigue formations are usually of secondary origin coming from the decline of the cover of the original forest vegetation. This also happens around the small lake deriving from a *niviera* where once, large quantities of winter snow were amassed, protected by straw and earth, so that it could be used as ice in summer.



Traditions

Regularly every year, on Ascension Day, Vita celebrates impressively the *Festa della Madonna di Tagliavia* - Festivity for the Madonna di Tagliavia with suggestive religious functions like midnight mass, the morning blessing of the animals, the pilgrimages and procession to which are associated the most genuine manifestations of Sicilian folklore, like the characteristic parade which takes place in the afternoon. It is a celebration of abundance but it is also a way to express thanks to the Madonna di Tagliavia for the harvest, not without propitiatory aims. The procession begins with the folklore group "Sicilia Bedda" entertaining the crowd with folklore sounds and dances; next comes the drum,

and behind this, three outriders on horseback open the *Cavalcata*, made up of about forty knights on mules or horses which represent the social classes of whom they hold the symbols: *borgeoise*, *massari* (transporters), *carrettieri* (carters), *deputati della festa* (overseers of the festivity), wineproducers. They move forward in order and some throw sugared almonds. The *borgeoise* carry the *Circu* or *Prisenti*, a composition made up of *cucciddati* (small round loaves of bread), with flowers and ears of wheat at the top. *La Cavalcata* is followed by richly decorated Sicilian wagons, on which the *carritteri* perform traditional songs. The *Carro del vino e delle olive* (wine and olive wagon), is imposing

and spectacular, formed by an original composition of twelve semi- wine presses, alluding to the wine production which the economy of Vita is based on, from which small bottles of wine and olives are thrown. After the *Carro dei burgisi*, preceded by a music band, the parade ends with the majestic and picturesque *Carrozza del pane* - Bread wagon, pulled by two impressive oxen; decorated with fen-berries and laurel and covered in carnations and *cucciddati*, it has on four sides a noticeable letter M, the symbol of Mary. From the wagon small quintal rolls of bread (about 40,000 pieces) are thrown from the wagon onto balconies. The rolls have zigzags along the top to signify the furrows of the plough.



Religion Remembrance Bonds

The celebration of the *Madonna di Tagliavia*, copatron saint of Vita, has been transferred also to Toronto Canada, by the numerous emigrants from Vita who have remained strongly linked to their town of origin. Between 1962 and 1964, they decided to enrich with frescoes at their own expense the church of Vita

in which is kept the painting (1939) object of cult worship. The devotion to the Madonna, which has origins in the Tagliavia sanctuary situated in the Corleone area, is flanked by that for San Francesco di Paola, and San Giuseppe (Saint Joseph); on the occasion of the festivity for the latter, on the 19th of March, the devoted

inhabitants of the town set up in altars decorated with symbolic bread. The people of Vita are united in the festivities in honour of San Vito, copatron saint of the city and of SS. Crocifisso, on the first Sunday in September, with religious celebrations and folklore events which always conclude with fireworks.

Altar of Saint Joseph



Madonna di Tagliavia festivity



Bread wagon, symbol of Mary





Art

Vita is also known as “Valley of the Murals”, due to the fact that numerous murals have been realized which decorate and connote streets and doorways of the historic centre. The aim to revitalize old doorways and walls of the now uninhabited houses has been admirably reached by painters who worked to represent the theme “Trades

and traditions of country civilisation” which develops along a route which crosses the historic centre. Murals inspired by the festivity in honour of the Madonna di Tagliavia with the theme “The Festivity” have also been realized. In 2002 the auditorium of the Social Centre welcomed artists of world-wide fame who, inside

the building, represented “The various expressions of art”. On the occasion of the 4th centenary of the foundation of the Municipality of Vita, two grand panels were made. The first is a socio-historic-cultural synthesis of the community of Vita. The second reproduces “The Battle of Calatafimi” (these panels can be found in the town hall).

Murals, *Madonna di Tagliavia*



Murals, *Potter*



Murals, *Old lady knitting*







Monuments

The whole of the old urban centre of Vita is a monument with its characteristic steps, and the typical constructions in chalk stone, used mostly in the corners and doorways of the houses. Once a number of *calcare* (limekilns) existed in the territory where the stone was baked and then broken up to be

used in building as glue. Traces of a limekiln can be found along the road which leads to Gibellina at the foot of the Baronía Wood. Other typical urban elements are the fountains Acquanova and Ponte realized in limestone. One of the oldest, la Carpitoli, is situated on the Baronía municipal road.

Some noble mansions from the XIX century, *Palazzo Daidone*, the church of the *Madonna del Rosario* or the *Madonna di Tagliavia*, realized around 1930, resisted the earthquake of 1968 as did the churches of Purgatorio (XVII and XIX centuries) and of San Francesco (1616), connected to the town hall.

Historic centre



Carpitoli Fountain



Madonna del Rosario church



Acquanova Fountain





Typical produce

The weaving of rugs on looms is typical of the local craftwork. These are products which have a very long tradition in Vita, like the working of the leaves of the dwarf palm and the making of baskets and bread baskets with olive or elm branches and reeds. The building and

carpentry sectors are reasonably developed. In the para-industrial sector a company with thirty years of experience, specialising in the production of bio-building and building material offers a complete range of technologically advanced products and

solutions for the laying of tiles and decoration, restoration and waterproofing of buildings, with complete respect for the environment and is present in the world, operating directly in Spain, Tunisia, Libia, Malta, Canada, Marocco and Pakistan.

Manufacturing of woven covers



Building material factories





Wine and food

The cultivation of the vines is the main resource of the territory; from the white and black grapes produced in the hilly areas, with advanced working techniques, fine wines are obtained, while the traditional olive trees yield a greatly renowned oil which has an extremely low acidity. There is also a good production of wheat and

cereal, followed by a noteworthy variety of delicious fruit. Honey represents an important part of the productive chain of the town and is characterised by the absence of additives. A typical dish is the "*taglierini con le fave secche*" - "*tagliarini pasta with dry broad beans*". Some craft companies maintain the

typically Mediterranean tradition of making conserves from the firstlings of the vegetable garden to be used during the year as hors d'oeuvres or side dishes. In addition, sheep farming is practiced with the relative production of cheese. There are also many breeders of cows for beef, sheep, goats and pigs.

Local wines



Extra virgin olive oil



Local cheese





Shows and events

During the first week in August, the *Festival Internazionale del Folklore Città di Vita* - International Festival of Folklore City of Vita, is held. It is one of the most important folkloristic events of western Sicily and it aims to promote the popular traditions of Sicily and of other regions of foreign countries through music and

entertainment. It is organised every year by the folkloristic group *Sicilia Bedda* with the sponsorship of the Town Municipality and foresees the participation, in addition to the host group, of other Italian and foreign groups coming from countries like Lithuania, Peru, Serbia and the Ukraine. The performances alternate between dance and music of

different cultures and traditions, which surprise everyone with their skill and distinctiveness. During the event, there is the *salsicciata* - sausage feast which creates great revelry and allows moments for the groups to mingle, and allows the tasting of local products and the experiencing of local traditions.

International Festival of Folklore



International Festival of Folklore



Madonna di Tagliavia festivity





Entertainment, sport and free time

The sports centres, distributed around the new urban centre, offer a satisfactory service for the practicing of various disciplines and include one football field, one five-a-side football field, two tennis courts and three bowls areas. Of particular importance in the social-cultural sphere is *Centro Sociale*

- Social Centre, a grand structure which, with its Auditorium and Multipurpose Hall, is used for cultural meetings, conferences, projections, shows, exhibitions and also evenings of entertainment. In the same centre is the Municipal Library and the multimedia library and the Vita Tourist Board

office (Pro loco). The structure is also used as a meeting place for young and old, through various initiatives and the attraction of cultural and recreation activities. The park in front, named after Vincenzo Renda, who was Mayor of Vita continually from 1944-46 to 1985, is also used for multiple open air functions.

Sporting facilities



Multipurpose centre



Municipal library





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Provincia Regionale
di Trapani



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