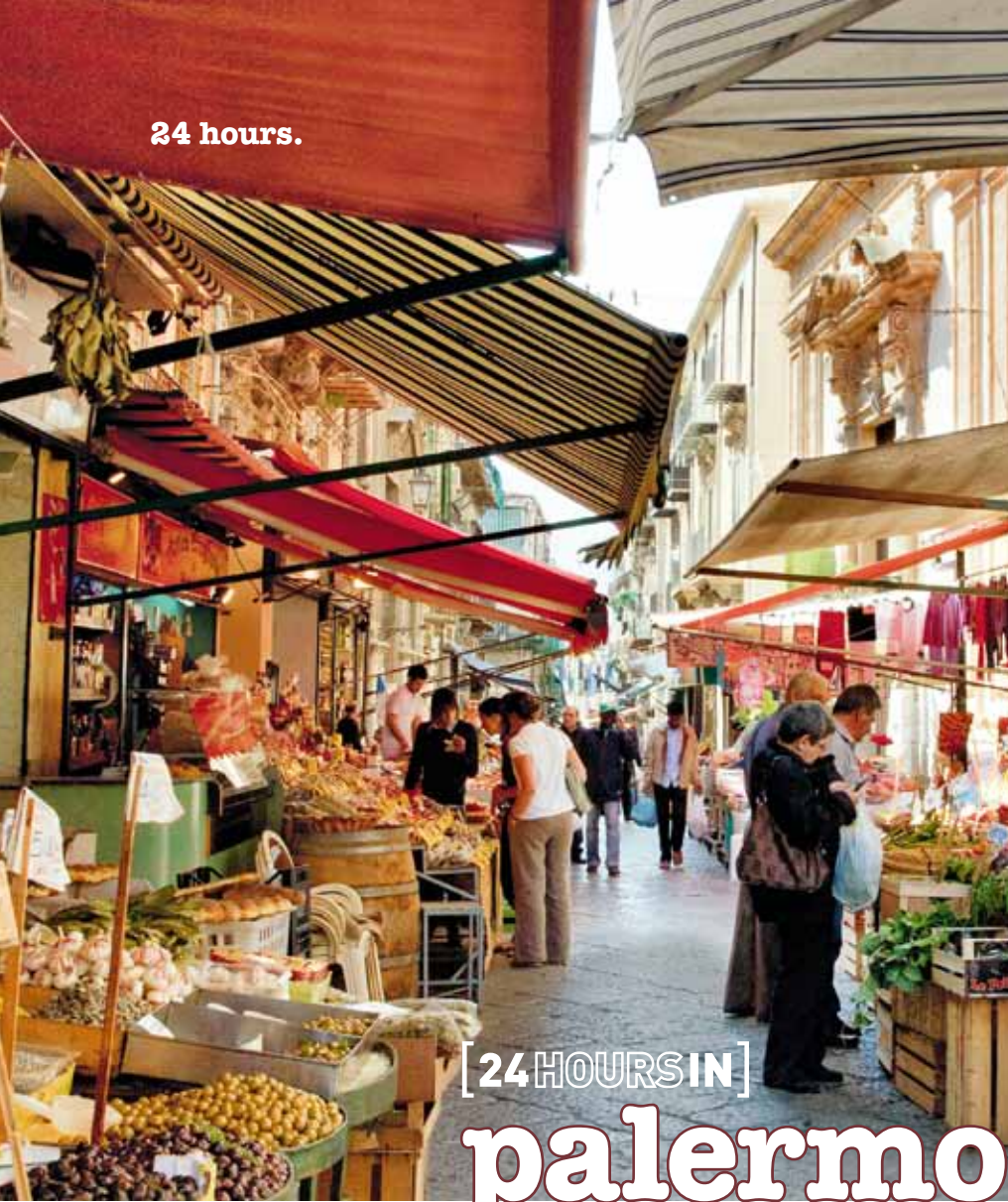


24 hours.



[24 HOURS IN]

palermo

Swap the Aussie winter for Mediterranean sunshine, fresh seafood and decadent frozen breakfasts in Sicily's capital, says Carla Capalbo.

9am

FROZEN BREAKFAST

When in Sicily, to do as the locals do: indulge in the ultimate summer breakfast – scoops of frozen coffee granita served in a soft brioche bun with whipped cream on top from **Antico Caffè Spinnato** (Via Principe di Belmonte 107-115). Or have a *spremuta d'arancia* (orange juice), freshly squeezed from the island's superbly fragrant blood oranges.

9.30am

HIT THE MARKETS

If it's a weekday, head to the colourful **Mercato del Capo** (Via Porta Carini and surrounding streets – above) in the old

Arab quarter, which is full of stalls selling fresh local produce. The fish displays are amazing, with all the Mediterranean's creatures on show, from octopus to scorpion fish. Look for Pantelleria capers preserved in salt and chunks of wine-red sundried tomato paste. Snack on a slice of hot *sfincione* (Sicilian pizza) from a street vendor while you admire the fruit and veg.

11am

COOL CATHEDRAL

Escape to the cool of the monumental **Palermo Cathedral** (Corso Vittorio Emanuele) showcasing a mix of all the cultures that dominated Sicily, from the Normans and Byzantines to the Saracens.

12.30pm

POTTERY AND PASTA

From the cathedral, walk down towards the sea and duck into **Casa Merlo** (Corso Vittorio Emanuele 231), an artisan ceramics shop that gathers the island's best handmade pots and plates. Then on to **Antica Focacceria S. Francesco** (Via A Paternostro 58) for a lunch of authentic dishes – perhaps arancini stuffed with ragu or pasta *alla Norma* (with eggplant). If the weather is nice, sit in the piazza beside the San Francesco baroque church.

3.30pm

GELATO TIME

Most shops don't reopen until 5pm, so now is a good time to explore the spectacular botanical garden or the boat-filled tourist port. As you wander, pick up a cone of gelato at **Gelateria Illardo** (Foro Umberto I 11) located within the palatial walls of the sea front. Try the varied citrus flavours, from mandarin to lemon.

7pm

TWILIGHT STROLL

Don't expect dinner at seven in Palermo, that's when the locals are setting out for *la passeggiata* – a leisurely stroll through the main streets in the cooler evening air before mealtime. If you're in the mood for a glass of wine and Sicilian artisan cheese, stop in at relaxed bar **La Dispensa dei Monsù** (Via Principe di Villafranca 59).

9pm

DINNER IN THE PIAZZA

Ristorante Sant'Andrea (Piazza Sant'Andrea 4) offers a modern approach to traditional recipes in a tiny piazza in the city centre. *Pasta con le sarde*, made with fresh sardines, is a house speciality.

11.30pm

LITERARY NIGHTCAP

Finish the night with a late drink and live music at bar/restaurant/bookshop **Kursaal Kalhesa** (Foro Umberto I 21). Hidden within the grandiose walls of the 16th century Porta dei Greci, it spills out into terraced gardens in summer. **d.**