



Mount Etna, is one of the most active volcanoes in the world. It is certainly also between the most charming. His geographic position in the middle of Mediterranean Sea, as well as his extension from the sea at about 3330 mt makes ideal conditions to develop an unbelievable variety of landscapes. Whose imagine the volcano as a desert land, made of bare and raw volcanic rock, it is wrong. In this map we give some suggestions to visit in the best way the volcano, but we want also to recommend to stick to guided excursion for many reasons. Indeed thanks to expert guides you'll discover the most beautiful places, the history and the culture of Etna regional park, appointed UNESCO site since 21 June 2013 for his geological peculiarity.

RECOMMENDED TRAILS

Some trails, selected on the attractiveness, but also among the best reported and therefore more usable independently (with adequate equipment, food and map). However, we recommend to contact expert guides for an incomparable visit experience.

1 - **Schiena dell'asino**: The most famous trail and best routed to reach the beautiful view on Valle del Bove. **Trail info**: Zafferana/Nicolosi, South-East Etna. 7 Km – Max altitude: 2050 mt. Medium difficulty. Departure coordinates: 37.701224, 15.014877

2 - **Crateri Sartorius**: The path turns on the rim of 7 secondary craters generated in the eruption of 1865. This excursion can be integrated in the day to the next n.3 path. **Trail info**: Sant'Alfio, North East Etna. 4 Km A/R – Max altitude: 1760 mt. Easy. Departure coordinates: 37.770793, 15.060453

3 - **Serracozzo trail**: track n.723 of CAI (Club Alpino Italiano) leads from Rifugio Citelli to Serracozzo, from where you will observe the amazing Valle del Bove and Summit Craters. Possible visit to the homonymous cave (light and helmet mandatory). **Trail info**: Sant'Alfio, Etna East. 9 km A / R - Max altitude: 2200 m. Medium difficulty. Departure coordinates: 37.764863, 15.0579

4 - **Piano Fiera – Altomontana trail**: Departing from this place it is possible to reach different places of huge impact. The De Fiore craters (er. 1974) far away only 3 Km and Altomontana forest trail with the refuges of Galvarina and Poggio La Caccia. **Trail info**: Adrano, Etna South East. Adrano. 12 / + km A / R - Max altitude: 2000 mt. Medium difficulty. Departure coordinates: 37.725838, 14.920528

5 - **Craters er. 2002/1923**: Close to touristic and ski areas of Piano Provenzana it is possible to reach eruptive fractures that destroy it in 2002 and those one that threatened the town in 1923. **Trail info**: Linguaglossa, Etna North East. 7 km A / R - Max altitude: 2100 mt. Medium difficulty. Departure coordinates: 37.797374, 15.039167

6 - **Piano dei Grilli loop trail**: Departing from the homonymous refuge is possible to range in many directions thanks to several paths that turn through the numerous lateral craters of this side. **Trail info**: Bronte, Etna West Est. 10 / + km A / R - Max altitude: 1700 mt. Medium difficulty. Departure coordinates: 37.745743, 14.871497

7 - **Eruption 1981**: The huge lava stream that lasted only 6 days is already visible from the highway, but we recommend to reach the heart of the erupted fracture from Case Pirao to go into the lush beech wood of Monte Spagnolo. **Trail info**: Randazzo, Etna Nord. 10 / + km A / R - Max altitude: 1600 mt. Medium difficulty. Departure coordinates: 37.844613, 14.990813

8 - **Grotta del Gelo**: it is possible to reach this cave from many trails. The best tracked departs from Rifugio Brunek (it is possible to follow dirt road by car for 2 km) crossing by the fashionable Grotta dei Lamponi (cave) – (bikers stop here!) **Trail info**: Linguaglossa / Castiglione, Etna Nord. 18 / + km A / R - Max altitude: 2040 mt. Challenging. Departure coordinates: 37.814764, 15.062293

9 - **Monte Nero degli Zappini**: path very easy, but however of big interest with availability to connect on Pista Altomantana. Starting from Piano Vetore a loop is closed crossing from Rifugio Santa Barbara. **Trail info**: Ragalna, Etna Sud. 3 / + km A / R – Max altitude: 1850 mt. Easy. Departure coordinates: 37.693329, 14.981285

Decimal coordinates suitable for google maps



Lateral craters

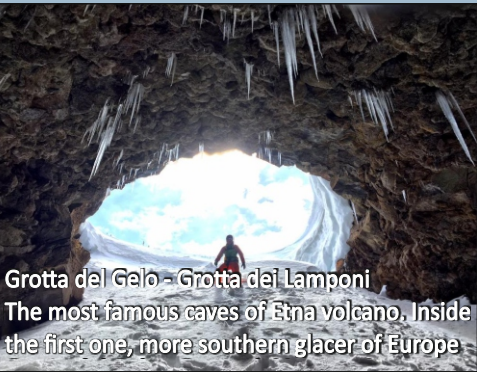
On mount Etna we count other than 300 monogenetic craters, result of single eruptive activity on flank of volcano to different altitudes. Some of this erupting in down altitude done origin to eruption that reached the villages and the sea, such the case of eruption of Catania of 1669 originated from Monti Rossi. For this reason the lateral eruptions are the most feared.



Etna West
The wildest land of volcano, rich in luxuriant vegetation and majestic flank craters



Etna North
This side is dominated by lava ropes of Sciara del Follone, an eruption of 10 years!



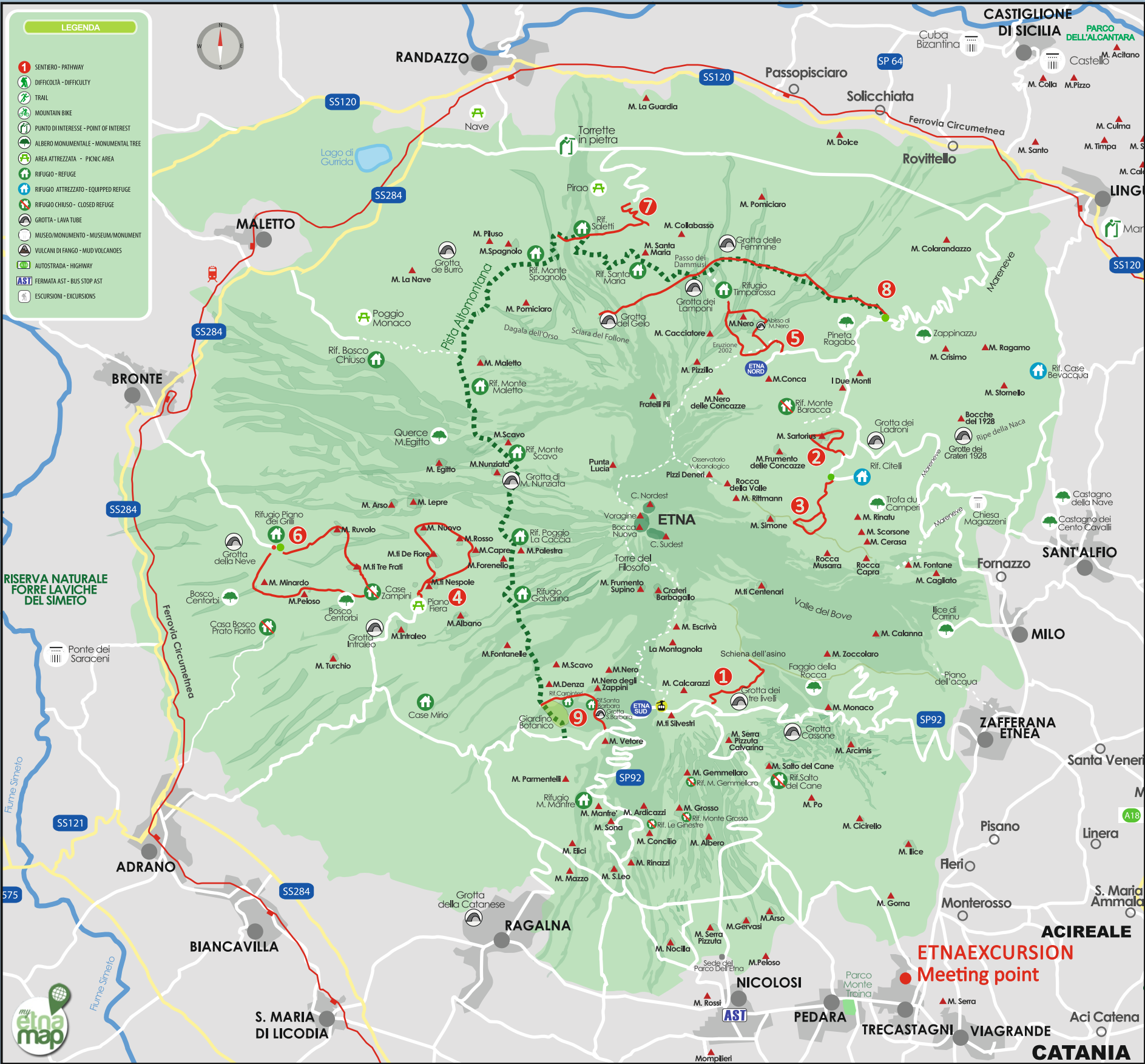
Grotta del Gelo - Grotta dei Lamponi
The most famous caves of Etna volcano, inside the first one, more southern place of Europe



Eruption 1981 (Randazzo)
The lava stream threatened the village of Randazzo with several fractures



Piano Provenzana - Er. 2002
The amazing paths depart from the ski slopes destroyed by lava flows



Vegetation

Those who expect only lunar and harsh landscapes will be pleasantly disappointed, in fact the volcanic soil is very fertile thanks to the wealth of minerals. Mount Etna offers in fact different vegetal landscapes in function of the morphology of the soil, microclimates (that vary between the slopes) and altitude. Already on recent scoriaceous lava flows, apparently without life, musk and lichens as well as different pioneers plants begin to colonize the lava. Between these the first is Aetnean Brooms that here can reach sometimes 10 meters end that between the end of May and July colors in yellow the lavas. On more ancient grounds, where rocks are eroded and formed the soil, are present very rich woods of chestnuts, oaks, Aetnean pines and beeches. Between the spontaneous arboreal species more particular we find certainly: Aetnean Birch with his characteristic white cortex and Black Pines. Mount Etna claim also 2 vegetal monuments of big interest: Il Castagno dei 100 Cavalli (the oldest chestnut of the world) and the Illice di Carlino (an Oak of 800 years old. See the map). Higher than 2000 meters the woods gone away and we have presence of shrubbery and pioneer vegetation. In spring and summer time you can admire in succession the violet (April/May), the soapwort (photo), Astragalus and the Senecio (between June and July) and August the chickweed that colour on white the lava sand. Some plants can grow up also at 3000 meters such as Daisy of Etna and Rumex.



Animals

The presence of animals is conditioned from different factors, first of all the presence of the man and absence of rivers in exception of some cases in down altitude. The human activity has meant that many species of animals become extinct. Common wild animals present into the park are: foxes, rabbits and hares, much more rare is to see a wild cat. Are present also porcupines, hedgehogs and weasels. Into the caves found refuge different species of bat. There is no shortage of reptiles among which non-poisonous snakes such as the dark rat snake and the most fearsome viper, poisonous but often non-mortal. The avifauna is much more varied, at the top of which we find the golden eagle (we say there are two couples) and many other diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey.



Altomontana trail

This path covers a distance of about 40 km and bypasses the volcano on 3 sides excluding the only eastern slope that is almost totally affected by the Valle del Bove. The path that was in origin featured from volcanic red soil (now almost completely extinct) allows you to enjoy breathtaking and little known landscapes of Etna. Along the way there are several bivouacs (see “are there shelters inside the park?”) to organize one or more overnight stays and divide the excursion.



Man and nature

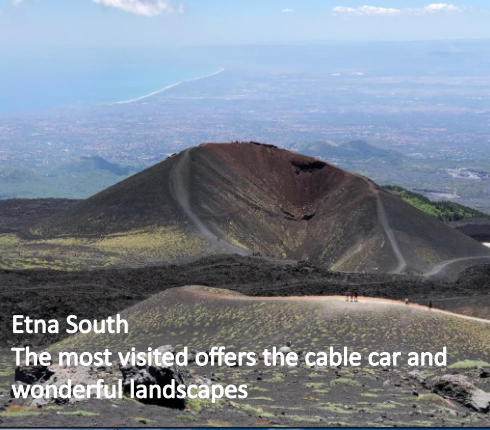
The particular geographic and climatic conditions, created an unique ecosystem, inside of it man from millenniums, created a symbiotic rapport developing different agricultural activities and pastoral thanks to richness of the soil. For this reason mount Etna is considered from people that live around it a mother figure that give presents. It is not accidental if among the many names prevails the dialectal exception used from people from Etna A Muntagna that remind the ancient arab roman Mongibello (Mons Gebel= The mountain between the mountains). Dry walls, terracing, pagghiari, casudde elements of rural architecture strictly made of lava stone, are visible throughout the territory.



Summit craters
To the top there are 5 main craters and volcanic activity



Etna East - Valle del Bove
Slope that hosts the big natural amphitheater produced by collaps of old volcanos



Etna South
The most visited offers the cable car and wonderful landscapes



Meeting point EtnaExcursionist
Free parking, rent equipment, daily departures excursions

Geology

The begin of Etna volcanism is done to the collision between the African and Euro-Asiatic plates that has generated magma thrusts from the mantle to the earth's crust. All started 500.000 years ago where today arise the famous Acitrezza's Faraglioni, witness of first submarine eruptions. For the first 400 thousand years there was a long phase of "fissural" eruptions of more fluid lavas, first then submarines then superficial, which formed a "shield" volcano, a building more wider than high. From 130 thousand years ago, a change in volcanism occurred with the transition to a central activity that developed several eruptive centers where today the Valle del Bove is located. Today many of those volcanic structures are partially existing or completely collapsed. The last phase, the one that identifies Etna as a stratovolcano or a building with more steeper slopes composed of multiple and heterogeneous eruptive products, began 60000 years ago with the development of the Cratere Ellittico, whose summit is estimated to be close to 4000 meters and which exploded 15 thousand years ago forming a large 4 km Caldera. Only about 15000 years ago began the formation of the current building called Mongibello. Today Etna is one of the most active volcanoes in the world, manifesting its power alternating eruptions from the summit craters, usually more explosive and short, to flank eruptions of the often effusive kind of long duration.



In this guide we give you some suggestions & information to visit Etna volcano, but we recommend to join in an arranged tour. The experience of local guides you'll have the opportunity to discover only the best places and trails of the most active volcano in Europe.



RECOMMENDED TOURS

FOR EVERYONE!

Etna jeep tour

Half day excursion by 4x4 jeep and easy trekking
4 stops and tasting included! From € 55 per person







Etna colors & flavours

For lovers of nature and gastronomy jeep tour (4 stops) or trekking and rich typical lunch to taste the Sicilian flavors. From € 75 per person

Sunset tour

A fascinating off-road tour and easy trekking (4 stops) which ends with a Sicilian sweet appetizer at the sunset. Starting from € 60 per person



Etna e Alcantara

During the day you will visit the volcano on board 4x4 vehicles on a stage itinerary. After the typical lunch, visit the Alcantara Gorges to admire the majestic columnar basalts. From € 39 (Family discounts).



SPECIAL ETNA GRANTOUR





Exclusive tour that includes 3 slopes of Etna in a super mix of hiking in the morning and adventurous jeep routes in the afternoon. Typical lunch included!

Tours for everyone always include a visit into a lava tube

SPORTS PEOPLE



Hiking tour into natural etna park

Half or full day trails to discover the most fascinating places. From € 50 for each





Hiking on the moon

Uphill by cableway lift and hiking on 2700 meters walking on sandy volcanic ground
From € 85 per person (includes 30€ cableway ticket)





Bike Tour Etna

Discover the most beautiful trails of the park by bike and expert guides. From € 80 each Bike rental



Quod tour and others activities

Trails and incentive tour into the regional park. See the website.



In our meeting point office, rent shoes and equipment
Discount for booking online and family groups...

10 COMMANDMENTS FOR THE EXCURSIONISTS

- 1 Choose the route based on your preparation, equipment and time available.
- 2 Long trousers and high trekking shoes are recommended on the volcanic ground.
- 3 Balance food and water according to the route and season (in summer a lot of water)
- 4 For trekking in isolated places inform someone about your travels
- 5 Get an updated hiking map and do not leave the trails
- 6 Take a first aid kit and a cortisone cream for the processionary caterpillars (April-June) or other insects
- 7 We are in a park. It is forbidden to give food to animals and to remove plants or rocks.
- 8 Do not leave traces of your passage. Take your waste with you!
- 9 Visit lava tube only with lights or helmet. Better with a guide
- 10 In case of emergency, the telephone number to contact is 118.

WHAT TO SEE IN HALF DAY?
A complete visit of mount Etna could ask different days. However organizing well times is possible to visit some point of interest also in half day. By car: it is easy to reach the touristic locality of Etna South or Etna North (about 2000 mt) where are visible the eruptive theatre of 2001 and 2002. We recommend to devote at only one part of the volcano. The south part (Nicolosi), that is the most touristic with cableway of Etna. On site a walk on Silvestri's craters and at few kilometres of car it is possible to reach the panoramic point of Valle del Bove (Valley of the Oxen) from locality Monte Pomiciaro. The North side (Linguaglossa) instead is less touristic but give very fashionable landscape, but also the vision of North East crater, higher point of the volcano and also the most chosen for outdoor activities. In trekking: for those that loves walk it is absolutely recommended this activity to visit the less touristic places. Take into consideration the trip recommended on map. Guided tour: ask for a guide is a good idea. He should choice for you the most right places for your needs. They are proposed also some trekking on not explored sides or some tour with jeep 4x4 that also provide 4/5 highlight, with visit of a lava cave and moreover with typical products tasting included, always accompanied of interesting explanations..

WHAT TO SEE IN ONE DAY?
Whose has availability to dedicate a full day to the visit of Etna will no regret it. Here some ideas. By CAR: Other to visit places described at preview point you could associate a passage in some places of Etna or in other point of naturalistic interest signed in this guide. In Summer time the lovers of nature can dedicate an afternoon to the visit of River Park of Alcantara Gorges or to the reserve of Ciclopi in Acitrezza, taking advantage of relative nearness of this places, where it is possible, to do a refresh bath. For gourmets we recommend a stop in one of the winery of the "Wine Road of Etna" or to a typical farmhouse where taste the gourmet Sicilian kitchen. In TREKKING: We remind that for lovers, the trekking is the best way to entry in contact with nature of volcano. There are different walking trips in only different hours of walk. Between classic excursion for example, the climb to Summit craters (see the map), the downhill in Valle del Bove or furthermore the visit to Sciara del Follone and to the Grotta del Gelo, lava cave that inside guest ice all the year or the Pista Altomontana of Etna (see at deepening) in Mountain Bike in only one day. Guided tours: However, we strongly advise you to contact a travel agency, which offer a very wide offer and will be able to drive you to the best for the satisfaction of your needs, making the most of the time available.

I HAVE NOT THE CAR...ARE THERE PUBLIC TRANSPORT?
Also if there are several road, the public transport service are rather lacking. The only bus line start one time at day in the morning from train station of Catania (Bus Lines AST) to Rifugio Sapienza (South part) and the Cableway of Etna. In alternative you could call to a taxi or rent with driver service or we invite you to evaluate that compared to costs in many cases similar or slightly higher, you can enjoy a more complete visit experience by participating in similar organized tours to those proposed in this guide, which include transportation.

ARE THERE ANY ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES INSIDE THE PARK?
The majority of accommodation facilities are situated into Etna villages. Between those the most closer and near to touristic station are town of South part (Nicolosi, Pedara, Trecastagni and Zafferana Etnea), ideals for the departure of guided excursion or to reach the Cableway of Etna while on North side there are Linguaglossa, Piedimonte, Castiglione di Sicilia where there is a preference for a more man-sized receptivity (B & B, small hotels, agritourism ...). There are also some high altitude refuges always easily reachable by road (in winter chains!) always near the tourist areas on both sides. Among the most famous we mention the shelters of the CAI Rifugio Sapienza - which in fact is a comfortable renovated hotel - or the Citelli shelter on the North-East side. An alternative to what is indicated, if you are not interested in reaching the tourist locations, can be stay on the north side in the medieval village of Randazzo. Here there are excellent farms to reach itineraries in trekking that are not very popular but very interesting.

ARE THERE SHELTERS INSIDE THE PARK?
Inside the Park there are shelters not managed made almost always in basaltic lava, with chimney and not drinking water. There are not toilet and it should bring equipment to sleep and eat. The majority of these shelters are open to public. Into our map we indicate the collocation of shelters along the Altomontana trail of Etna, so in maximum altitude of 2000 meters. It does not exist shelters in high altitude at exception of a camp created by Civil Protection in 2017 closer to Torre del Filosofo on Etna South (2800 mt). There are then refuges managed and easily reachable by car, in this case a little research on web is enough. It is forbidden free camp!

IS MOUNT ETNA EASY TO REACH?
Etna enjoys a favourable geographical position and is not far from the nearest tourist centres. From Catania the kilometers to reach Rifugio Sapienza are 30. From Taormina are just 45 Km. From Siracusa are about 90 Km. So in one day is possible to planning the visit of the volcano. The main roads for the touristic/ski areas go up from Nicolosi and Zafferana (SP92) Pedara (c.d. road Salto del cane) both arrive to Rifugio Sapienza and the road Mareneve from Milo or Linguaglossa that lead to Piano Provenzana – Etna Nord. From November to April the snow chains are mandatory.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO SKI ON THE VOLCANO?
Yes! There are 2 ski areas, Etna Sud-Nicolosi and Etna Nord-Linguaglossa open during all winter days, weather conditions and snow allowing (snow report and info on www.etnasci.it), for a total of about 22 km of blue and red pistas. Skiing on the volcano is a truly unique experience because on clear days you can admire the volcanic landscape and in the background the sea, half Sicily and Calabria..

IS IT POSSIBLE TO SEE THE LAVA?
Etna is one of the most active volcanoes in the world and it erupts with a very closer frequency (medium one time during one year). The possibility to see an eruption depend also from the lasting of the event, in fact sometimes the eruption is long only few hours but can lasting also month or years such us it is reminded for the eruption of Zafferana of 1991/1993 (473 days). If we have chance to visit the volcano during an eruptive phase, we recommend to ask for expert guide, that having a good knowledge of the best points to observe it, they permit to enjoy of a unique unforgettable spectacle in safety.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO VISIT SUMMIT CRATERS?
Normally yes, unless there are limitations due to volcanic risk. The period for the excursions in trekking is from May to November, instead with snow it became an alpine experience reserved only at expert, better with ski. This experience must to be done obligatory with expert guide that we recommend to contact because there are limited availability. To know: the ascent to the summit craters is a moderately demanding excursion only suitable for good walkers with adequate equipment, trekking shoes and layered clothing, keeping in mind that the temperature is often near zero even in summer.

THE CLIMATE
The climate on Etna varies a lot according to the seasons and the altitude in which you are located. For many days of the year the wind is felt. Over 1500 meters, even in summer, temperatures can be relatively low around 12/15 °. Only in the case of extraordinary heat, 25 degrees are exceeded. Over 3000 meters the temperatures are constantly close to 0 °. In winter, from December to March, already at the same altitude it often snows. This involves an adequate choice of clothing.

