The University of Catania

Established in 1434, the University of Catania is the oldest university in Sicily. Its academic nicknames are: *Siculorum Gymnasium* and *Siciliae Studium Generale*. It hosts 12 faculties and over 62,000 students and offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Catania hosts also a Higher education centre, the Scuola Superiore di Catania, conceived in 1998 to select the smartest minds and offer them a course of studies including analysis, research and experimentation.

Catania is home to the prestigious *Istituto Musicale Vincenzo Bellini*, an advanced Institute of musical studies (Conservatory), and the *Accademia di Belle Arti*, an advanced institute of artistic studies. Both institutions offer programs of university level for musical and artistic education.

Lectures are held in:

- Palazzo Ingrassia, via Biblioteca
- Verginelle, Via Casa Nutrizione
- Edificio Turrisi Colonna, Via Ofelia, 1
**History of Catania**

Catania was founded around 729 BC. The ancient village of Katane was occupied by Chalcidian Greek settlers from nearby Naxos along the coast. It became the Chalcidian colony of Katánē under a leader named Euarchos (Euarchus) and the native population was rapidly Hellenised. Thucydides states that it came into existence slightly later than Leontini (modern Lentini), which he claims was founded five years after Syracuse, or 730 BC. The settlement acropolis was on the hill of Monte Vergine, a defensible hill immediately west of the current city centre. The port of Catania appears to have been much frequented in ancient time and was the chief place of export for the corn of the rich neighbouring plains.
Monuments and places

The city was buried by lava stone a total of seventeen times in recorded history, and in layers, under the present-day city, there is the Roman city that preceded it, and the Greek city before that. Many of the ancient monuments of the Roman city were destroyed by the numerous earthquakes. Currently, different ancient remains can be seen and visited in the city-centre, as part of an archaeological park (Parco Archeologico Greco-Romano di Catania). The symbol of the city is U’ Liotru, or the Fontana dell’Elefante, assembled in 1736 by Giovanni Battista Vaccarini. It portrays an ancient lava stone elephant and is topped by an Egyptian obelisk from Syene. The legend narrates that Vaccarini's original elephant was neuter, as the virility of Catania men was somewhat offended. So, in order to appease the male population, Vaccarini appropriately appended elephantine testicles to the original statue.
The Cathedral was destroyed and rebuilt several times because of earthquakes and eruptions of the nearby Mount Etna. It was originally constructed in 1078-1093, on the ruins of the ancient Roman Achillean Baths, by order of Roger I of Sicily, who had conquered the city from the Islamic emirate of Sicily. At the time, it had the appearance of a fortified church (ecclesia munita). Further damage was caused by a fire in 1169, but the most catastrophic event was caused by the earthquake of 1693, which again left it mostly in ruins. It was subsequently rebuilt in Baroque style. Today, traces of the original Norman edifice include part of the transept, the two towers and the three semi-circular apses, composed of large lava stones, most of them recovered from imperial Roman buildings.

The main square of Catania is Piazza Duomo, but there are others important squares like Piazza Università, Piazza Stesicoro that crosses Via Etnea, the most important road in Catania.
Erasmus mobility is a very beautiful experience, but sometimes we need to solve some problems or face up with several documents. If you need help, these are the contacts that you need.

**Department delegate**
Prof. Paola Clara Leotta
pcleotta@unict.it

**International mobility coordinator**
for degree courses in
Education and Tourism Sciences
Prof. Cinzia Recca
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**Where to find us**
Via Teatro Greco 84.
“Le Verginelle” Building

**Timetables**
Monday, Tuesday; Wednesday, Thursday
10,00 - 12,00
Our website: http://www.disfor.unict.it/
Library services

The Department of Education has a rich library where you can find numerous books of great importance that can come to help you during your studies.

For information and requests you can contact the library office
Via e-mail: disfor.serv-biblio@unict.it
or calling the phone No. 095 7466379
from Monday to Friday, from 8:30 to 13:30.

You can also click on this link to find the books of your interest
http://www.sida.unict.it/
CUS – Sport and other activities

If you are a sport person, CUS will be your second home. The CUS Catania offers many sports activities. Just call the phone number or go directly to the CUS building for more information.

Viale Andrea Doria, 6

Website: http://www.cuscatania.it/  Phone n.: 095 336327
E.R.S.U. - Regional university services

The University of Catania, together with E.R.S.U., works in synergy to ensure that all students have the easiest possible study experience. All students know they can count on the services offered, including university accommodation, university canteens and study rooms. In Catania there are three (active) dorms, and three university canteens (Mense), as well as study rooms.

University restaurants – “mensa”

**Mensa “Oberdan Centro”**
Via Guglielmo Oberdan, 174

**Mensa “La cidadella”**
Via Santa Sofia, 107-109

**Mensa “Vittorio Emanuele”**
Via Vittorio Emanuele, 36

If you want to use this service, call this number: **095 7517910** or visit this website:

[https://www.ersucatania.it/servizi-di-ristorazione/](https://www.ersucatania.it/servizi-di-ristorazione/)

Dorms

**Oberdan Centro**
Via Guglielmo Oberdan, 174

**Toscano Scuderi**
Via Etnea, 440

**La Cidadella**
Via Santa Sofia, 64 Building 9

If you want to use this service, call this number: **095 7517910** or visit this website:

[https://www.ersucatania.it/residenze-universitarie/](https://www.ersucatania.it/residenze-universitarie/)
**AMT and FCE – Bus and Metro**

Catania has a city bus line that will allow you to reach the main places of interest. The buses that you have to take into consideration are:

the BRT, that will allow you to reach “La Cittadella”; the 2 – 5 buses that link the city centre with other peripheric places; and the ALIBUS, that is very important to reach the airport. The price for one ticket is 1.50€ and 4.00€ for the ALIBUS. To use this service, you can use moovit or other apps.

In Catania, there is a metro line which connects the central Piazza Stesicoro with the Nesima station, from which you can also reach the mall “Centro Sicilia” by a shuttle bus. By metro you can reach also Corso Italia full of shops (Metro Italia), and the seaside (lungomare di Ognina, Galatea stop). The price for one ticket is 1.00€.
Arancino o Arancina?
Catania culinary art is famous all over the world, but perhaps not everyone knows that in the city it is important get to know the *tavola calda*, especially the famous *arancino*, fried rice and stuffed with meat sauce or pistachio and other delicacies. So, where can you eat the best arancino in town? Savia, Spinella or Canusciuti?

**Granita, cassatella and “food porn”**
Catania is the cradle of culture, knowledge, art, but also “food porn”. If you prefer sweet over salty you must try our dessert, granite and ice cream. In Catania, there are many places that are famous for their culinary experience (Savia or Spinella? Café Duomo or Scardaci? It doesn't matter, the thing that matters most is to try everything). And if you want to eat delicious dessert, Choco Fusion, Fiordilatte or Quaranta will be your favourite places. If you are a dreamer and you love a magic place, the Verso Cooffice is your place, the Café located in via Monserrato, 116 (check its social profile on Instagram or its website).

Pharmacy list
Cutelli pharmacy, via Vittorio Emanuele II, 54; phone n. 095 531400
De Gaetani pharmacy, via Vittorio Emanuele II, 114; phone n. 095 326 962
Minerva pharmacy, via Etna, 385; phone n. 095 436 447
Vieni pharmacy, Piazza Duomo, 16; phone n. 095 715 0538
Monserrato pharmacy, via G. D’Annunzio, 9/11; phone n. 095 445 086
Guarnaccia Sossi pharmacy, Viale Vittorio Venero, 135; phone n. 095 503937
Lucina pharmacy, via Umberto I, 125; phone n. 095 311 691
Etnea pharmacy, via Etna, 591; phone n. 094 431 228
Catania is a big city and like many European cities it has its strengths and weaknesses. Some areas of the city have a difficult social reality, so it is recommended that students pay attention to maps and distances from the centre. The city is always alive, night and day you can enjoy it. During the day, the Villa Bellini will allow you to spend time outdoors, while the squares in the city centre will be good places to enjoy an ice cream or a granita. In the night, you can spend some time outdoor and have a drink in many different places like “Via Gemellaro”, or, “Ostello” a pub near Piazza Duomo, and if you love castles, you can go to the Castello Ursino and Gammazita pub.

Although the city is busy night and day, you had better avoid walking around alone; we suggest you go around in group, to avoid unpleasant situations.
Enjoy your stay!

The guide has been written by some of our students in Tourism Science:

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