



Main Office: piazzetta Scannaserpe, 3

Retail: via Praga, 48

Palermo / Sicily / Italy

TOUR OF SICILY

5 DAYS/4 NIGHTS

DAY 1 Apt Catania / Catania / Syracuse

2:30 pm Tour participants arrive at Catania airport.

Meeting with the accompanying guide and the driver. Departure towards Catania.

3:30 pm Arrival in Catania

Catania, the second largest city in Sicily, is located on the Ionian coast, at the foot of the majestic Mount Etna. It is a lively town, with plenty of bars, restaurants and shops. Walking through the Centro Storico, with its baroque style buildings, you must not miss visiting the great Piazza Duomo, with the enormous baroque cathedral dedicated to Saint Agatha and the Elephant Fountain, symbol of Catania and the prestigious Etnea Avenue, with its elegant shops and cafes.

04:30 pm Visit of the Palazzo Biscari in Catania.

The owner, Prince Ruggero Moncada, will offer drinks in his private apartment (only if he is in Catania on the days of the visit, otherwise his wife or a trusted person will replace the Prince). One of Sicily's most important Rococo achievements, the Biscari Palace was rebuilt starting in 1702 by the Prince of Biscari. The richly carved façade and lavish interiors from the mid to late 18th century are among the finest in Sicily.

06:00 pm Departure to Syracuse.

07:00 pm Arrival at the Grand Hotel Ortigia

V.le Mazzini, 12, 96100 Siracusa SR Telephone: 0931 464600 on the historic peninsula of Ortigia.

8:30 pm Dinner at the hotel's panoramic restaurant.

DAY 2 Syracuse / Noto / Syracuse

Breakfast in hotel

9:00 am Bus departure from Siracusa to Noto.

9:30 am Arrival in Noto

The morning is dedicated to exploring Noto, capital city of baroque art in Europe. Old Noto was completely destroyed in the extremely violent earthquake that hit eastern Sicily in 1693, an earthquake that also damaged Catania and Syracuse. The current site of Noto was rebuilt from scratch, and almost entirely in the Baroque style, the predominant building style in Sicily at the time. Don't miss the Cathedral, a magnificent example of baroque art.

11:00 am Private tour of the recently restored Palazzo Castelluccio with aperitif

The Di Lorenzo del Castelluccio Palace belonged to one of the oldest Sicilian families in Noto, the Di Lorenzo, marquises of Castelluccio. It was built in 1782, a period that followed the violent earthquake of 1693, the tragic and famous earthquake that destroyed much of the Val di Noto. Its façade, which is located on Via Cavour, does not adopt the baroque style typical of the reconstructions carried out at that time in the main buildings of the city, but rather follows a neoclassical style, in vogue at the end of the 18th century. . Style that can also be found in the well-preserved frescoes of the vaults and walls of the

traditional "noble floor". The original Sicilian ceramic floors have been cleaned and preserved to perfection, maintaining the elegance and shine of the past.

01:00 pm Free lunch in Noto

02:30 pm Return to Syracuse

03:00 pm Visit of the Neapolis Archaeological Park

The most visited among the monumental areas of Syracuse is undoubtedly the archaeological park of Neapolis, which contains the most important testimonies of ancient Greek and Roman Syracuse thanks to which the city has the title of UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Greek theatre, the Roman amphitheatre, the quarries, the ear of Dionysus, the altar of Hiero, are just some of the monuments found within this vast green area located today at the immediate entrance to modern Syracuse.

05:30 return to the hotel

Free dinner and accommodation.

DAY 3 Syracuse/ Palermo

Breakfast in hotel

09:00 am Walk through Ortigia to admire its monuments

The ruins of the Temple of Apollo are one of the first monuments one encounters upon entering Ortigia, the oldest part of the city of Syracuse. This is a very important testimony, because it marks a change in the construction techniques of temples in Sicily, moving from wood to stone.

Among the monuments, the elegant baroque façade of the Cathedral of Syracuse stands out for its formal cleanliness and clarity, whose architectural structure, conceived as a precious chest, hides one of the most famous and best preserved Doric style monuments in Sicily: the temple of Athena. Almost all the columns of the peristyle and part of the cell walls can still be seen from the Greek temple, ordered to be built by the Syracuse tyrant Gelone in 480 BC. C., to thank the goddess of Wisdom for the victory achieved in Imera against the Carthaginians. In the 6th century AD. C., the columns were incorporated into the Byzantine church that was superimposed on the original Templar structure of the building. The Byzantines erected solid walls in the space between the columns and opened eight arches in the walls of the old cell, thus transforming the temple into a Christian basilica with three naves that were consecrated the Virgin Mary.

We find the Aretusa Fountain in the heart of Ortigia on a terrace overlooking the port, one of the places, that conveys the most reminiscences of Syracuse's past. To understand it, it is worth explaining, that according to Greek mythology, Arethusa was a nymph whom the goddess Artemis turned into a source to escape the amorous harassment of Alpheus, son of the god Oceanus. However, Arethusa, taking refuge with her new form of fountain in Ortigia, did not imagine that Alpheus, madly in love with her, after transforming himself into a river, was going to flow until he ended up melting in the waters of Arethusa and managing to be united with his beloved.

11:30 am Private tour of the privately owned Palazzo Beneventano Del Bosco

Organized by Baron Benevetano (only if he is in Syracuse on the days of the visit, instead a trusted person replaces the Baron). Erected after the devastating earthquake of 1693, the palace stands as one of Syracuse's most complete baroque achievements.

01:30 pm Lunch on the noble floor of the Beneventano Palace

03:30 pm Departure to Palermo

7:30 pm Arrival at the Grand Hotel Des Palmes

Via Roma, 398, 90139 Palermo PA - Telephone: 091 804 8800 and check in.

Free dinner in Palermo.

DAY 4 Monreale / Palermo

Breakfast in hotel

9:00 am Departure from Palermo towards Monreale

Visit to the Cathedral of Monreale with its impressive gold mosaics, considered the pinnacle of achievements in Arab-Norman art. The cathedral was founded in 1172 by William II. We will also visit the beautiful Cloister of the Benedictines. Due to the size and richness of its shapes, it represents an extraordinary example of this type of construction, which seems to evoke the porticoed patios of Islamic stately homes. In the grandiose framework of its four wings, dotted with paired columns supported by a low parapet and pointed arches, an extraordinary richness of shapes and decorations is developed, visible in the alternation of smooth columns and polychrome inlays, in the reliefs that decorate the shafts. of the quadruple columns in the corners, but above all in the enormous variety and splendour of the capitals and abacuses, where sacred themes are confused with profane ones, between animals and symbolic and fantastic figures. In the southwest corner is the loggia with the fountain: water flows from a column in the shape of a stylized palm tree with figures of bacchantes between musicians.

12:00 Return to Palermo

The visit continues along Vittorio Emanuele Street, until reaching the Cathedral. Tradition has it that the Cathedral of Palermo, dedicated to the Virgin of the Assumption, was built on a first Christian basilica from the 6th century. Transformed into a mosque under Islamic domination, in 1072 it was returned to Christian worship by Roberto and Ruggero d'Altavilla. Gualtiero, archbishop of Palermo from 1169 to 1190, was responsible for the construction of the current Norman building, consecrated in 1185. The building has a basilica plan with three naves on which a large sanctuary is grafted, expanded by a spacious opening on the front. Outside, on the south side, a large Catalan Gothic style portico was built around 1465. The southwest façade dates from the 14th-15th centuries, while the group of neo-Gothic bell towers that rise above the bell tower were built between 1840 and 1844. The decorative system with lava inlays, with ornamental motifs of Islamic taste, covers both the exterior walls of the Cathedral and the apses, and is largely original from the 12th century.

1.30 pm Free lunch in Palermo

4:00 pm In the afternoon a tour of the Palazzo Valguarnera-Gangi

Privately owned and little seen, the palace is located in the heart of Palermo's Kalsa district. Dating back to the 1750s. Most of the palace reconfiguration is attributed to the renowned Trapani architect, Andrea Gigante. Most notable are the Galleria degli Specchi (Gallery of Mirrors), the Chinoiserie rooms and the monumental staircase. We will be guests of the owner, Princess Carine Vanni Calvello Mantegna di Gangi (only if she is in Palermo on the days of the visit, instead a trusted person will replace the Princess).

Welcome toast, accompanied by Sicilian food products (as an aperitif) or, depending on the time of day, typical Palermo sweets with tea, coffee, juices.

8:30 pm Free dinner in Palermo

DAY 5 Palermo / Apt Palermo

Breakfast in hotel

9:00 am Visit of the historic centre of Palermo to see its historical monuments

We start with a visit to the Palazzo dei Normanni, including the majestic Capella Palatina. The Royal Palace rises above the first Punic settlements of Palermo, as narrated in the basement of the building, under the Duca di Montalto room, but it was also built on the remains of a previous structure from the Islamic period and has undergone important extensions and transformations. between the 16th and 17th centuries. The complex is located on the highest point of the ancient city, transformed by the Normans from their first settlement into a business and residential centre, therefore a symbol of the power of the monarchy. It was Roger II, crowned king of Sicily in 1130, who ordered its construction to turn it into his own palace: he was responsible for the most representative buildings such as the Greek Tower, the Pisana Tower, the Joharia and the Palatine Chapel. In the Chapel the Upper order is decorated with figurative mosaics made by Byzantine workers. The entire chapel is decorated: the Byzantine mosaics of the presbytery, made under Roger II, represent scenes from the life of Christ, Saints, Prophets and Evangelists and the image of Christ Pantocrator in the apse and in the dome. Those of the naves, which date from the reign of William I and William II, instead illustrate episodes from the Old Testament in the central nave and scenes from the lives of Saints Peter and Paul on the sides. The western wall houses the royal throne, elevated by five steps and decorated with opus sectile marble; Above is the mosaic with the imposing figure of Christ enthroned between Saints Peter and Paul, dated to the reign of William II (1166-1189). The three naves are covered with wooden ceilings, painted by Muslim artists.

After then we visit the Quattro Canti, which is also known as Piazza Villena (or Vigliena), as Ottagono del Sole, as Teatro del Sole and as Teatro della Città, but for all Palermo residents it is just the Quattro Canti (the four corners). The square was born at the intersection of what were the two central streets of Palermo: Via Maqueda on one side and Corso Vittorio Emanuele on the other. The result was an octagonal square, embellished in the 17th century with sculptures and decorations displayed on the facades of the four buildings on both sides of the square.

The Quattro Canti are also known as Teatro del Sole. The name has an architectural motivation, since the exposure of the buildings means that at least one façade is always illuminated by the sun, throughout the year. Another name, with which the people of Palermo call this very original square is Teatro della Città. The reason is as simple as it is fascinating: this is the place that in past centuries hosted the most important events, from festivals to capital executions.

We continue with the Fontana Pretoria. The fountain has an elliptical plan with concentric vessels, arranged on three levels; Stairs and statues alternate according to a classic and symmetrical scheme. The four ponds on the first level, with statuary groups of recumbent figures, represent the rivers of Palermo: Oreto, Papireto, Gabriele and Maredolce; On the fence the faces of the Genius of Palermo, Saint Rosalía and the Praetorian Eagle are reproduced. A rich plastic repertoire of statues that represent mythological deities, monsters, animals, dolphins, harpies and mermaids. The obvious nudity of the exposed figures did not fail to disturb the minds of the citizens who renamed this site "Piazza della Vergogna – the square of Shame". Next to the Square, you will find the church of San Cataldo and the church of Martorana, with the Arabs red domes and the linear and serious style.

1.15 pm Departure to the airport of Palermo and end of our services.