



Main Office: piazzetta Scannaserpe, 3

Retail: via Praga, 48

Palermo / Sicily / Italy

TOUR OF SICILY

16 DAYS/15 NIGHTS

DAY 1 CATANIA

Pick up at the airport and accommodation at the hotel in Catania.

DAY 2 CATANIA / RIVIERA OF THE CYCLOPS / CATANIA

Catania under the watchful eye of the Etna Volcano, has been able throughout its history to adapt itself to the many natural disasters that have shaped its architecture. Devastated seven times by volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, it was forced to be rebuilt practically from scratch. In 2002, UNESCO declared Catania a world heritage site.

Unmissable visits are the Cathedral Square where the Municipality and the Cathedral are located, around the Vacarini Elephant Fountain; then the Pescheria market, and the Fiera market, the theatre and the Roman amphitheatre, the Odeon, Via Crociferi with its row of churches, the Bellini Gardens, the Teatro Massimo Vincenzo Bellini, Via Etna with its shops and ice cream bars, San Nicolo and the convent of the Benedictines, Ursino castle

The tour continues with a fascinating drive along the coast, the so-called Riviera dei Ciclopi, towards Acireale. The road winds along the rugged coast and dives between the houses of picturesque fishing villages, such as Acitrezza and Acicastello, where you will see lava flows emerging from the seabed. Stop in Acireale, the largest town in this area, on a rocky hill. Terrace with sea views. You will have time to admire the beautiful baroque buildings that embellish the old city centre and taste a delicious Sicilian ice cream!

Accommodation in Catania.

DAY 3 CATANIA / ETNA / CATANIA

Etna at 3,342 meters, is the largest active volcano in Europe. This gigantic mass occupies a large area of the eastern part of the island. The slopes begin at around 1000 meters, recognizing a typical truncated cone shape with a moderate slope.

At 2500 meters of altitude, numerous modern cones appear, then, between 2900 and up to 3250 the slope becomes more abrupt, a huge cone and several craters with permanent smoke clouds. There are chronicles of its eruptions for more than 2000 years. The rim of the volcano's crater is approximately 3250 m. and one of the most overwhelming spectacles in the European mountains awaits us. We will make an excursion with 4x4 jeep and alpine guides to the summit of the volcano. Then a stop at an Etna winery for a wine tasting with lunch.

Accommodation in Catania.

DAY 4 CATANIA / CLIFFS OF THE ALCANTARA RIVER / TAORMINA

Departure towards Taormina, with a stop at the cliffs of the Alcantara River.

The cliffs of the Alcántara River had their origin at the dawn of time, due to the eruption of the Mojo crater on the northern slope of Etna, which sent out an enormous amount of lava. As it solidified, the Alcántara River began to make its way through it, releasing two high basalt walls characterized by

fascinating prismatic shapes. The name of the river and its valley dates back to the period of Arab domination in Sicily: they called the river Al Qantarrah.

The cliffs can be visited in summer when the water level is low.

The river created an excavation a few meters wide but more than 20 meters deep, it is impressive and wild, with two black stone walls rising opposite each other and stretching towards the sky. The chromatic contrasts are very strong between the black of the rock, the blue of the sky and the green of the water.

"If someone who was only going to spend a day in Sicily asked me what he should see, I would answer, without a doubt, Taormina" Guy de Maupassant 1885.

Taormina, without a doubt one of the Sicilian jewels, is located two hundred meters high, on Mount Tauros. It is placed on a splendid natural terrace. It is worth highlighting the Greek Theatre, built in pure Greek style taking advantage of the cuneiform geography of the hill. There are even stair treads polished directly into the rock. The view from the stands allows a panoramic view of the Bay of Naxos and Etna in the background.

It is very pleasant to walk around this picturesque city, especially along Corso Umberto, the main street, full of shops, bars, etc. From April IV Square, you can enjoy an exceptional panoramic view of the Bay of Naxos and Etna. On the steep Cathedral square, there is an original ornamental fountain with sea horses.

Accommodation in Taormina.

DAY 5 TAORMINA / FORZA D'AGRO / SAVOCA / MESSINA / MILAZZO

Departure towards Milazzo with stops in Forza D'Agro, Savoca and Messina.

Forza D'Agro and Savoca are two small towns, where The Godfather was filmed, Although the story takes place in Corleone, the city was too modern for Coppola who looked for other places to place this city.

Forza D'Agro is where the younger Don Vito is seen fleeing from the gangsters on a donkey and where Michael seeks refuge and where many exteriors were filmed.

Savoca is one of the most "Beautiful towns in Italy", and in the square the Bar Vitelli is located, practically intact. where Michael asks his father for Apollonia's hand. The interior is a museum of memories from the filming of the film and where you can have a Granita di Limone (lemon slushie.)

Nearby is the church of Santa Lucia where they get married.

We will continue to Messina for a panoramic tour of the city that includes views over the Strait that separates Sicily from the mainland, the Cathedral and the Renaissance fountains of Orione and Neptune. At the end of the day arrival in Milazzo and accommodation.

DAY 6 MILAZZO / PANAREA / STROMBOLI / MILAZZO

Departure from Milazzo at 12:30. After leaving the port of Milazzo we head towards Panarea.

Panarea, the smallest, oldest and least elevated island of the Aeolian archipelago, is also the most glamorous, frequented by personalities who love the sea, beaches and lively nightlife. The historic centre is a colourful picture of intense blue and pure white houses that illuminate the narrow streets that lead to the Church of San Pietro (the main religious building on the island). On foot or in the typical Panarotian taxis, we recommend visiting the prehistoric village of Capo Milazzese, an important archaeological site of the island, which testifies to the ancient roots of Panarea (dating back to 1400 BC). You cannot miss a visit to the amphitheatre-shaped bay of Cala Junco, which, bordered on the sides by extravagant rock formations, creates a spectacular natural pool ideal for diving. Finally, lying on the sandy beach of Cala degli Zimmari is a luxury for few.

Leaving Panarea, you will navigate the route which together with the islets of Basiluzzo, Spinazzola, Lisca Bianca, Dattilo, Bottaro, Lisca Nera and the rocks of Panarelli and Formiche form a microarchipelago between Lipari and the island of Stromboli. Stromboli, unique in its kind, is the island where one of the most active volcanoes in the world is located. The rhythmic explosions of ash and lapilli make it a charming and wild place. During the stop you can visit Piazza San Vincenzo, which takes its name from the church of the same name and from the house where Rossellini and Ingrid Bergman stayed during the filming of the film "Stromboli Land of God". From the square you can see a panoramic view on the port with Strombolicchio, the oldest volcano in the Aeolian Islands. An impressive landscape later at night, when the fire of the eruptions and the darkness give life to ever new creations of colours in the Sciara del Fuoco, visible from the sea during the return trip.

Return to Milazzo between 10:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. depending on the sunset.

DAY 7 MILAZZO / LIPARI / VULCANO / MILAZZO

Departure from Milazzo at 9.30 am.

After leaving the Port we will head towards Lipari arriving at the Marina Corta Port.

Lipari, where the contrast between the blue of the sea and the white of the pumice mountains frame the two famous cliffs "Petra Lunga" and "Petra Menalda", is the largest and most populated island of the Aeolian archipelago. We recommend visiting the Lipari Castle, inside which is the Basilica of San Bartolomeo, patron saint of Lipari, or exploring the archaeological area located on "Contrada Diana", visiting the "Luigi Bernabo Brea" archaeological museum. Finally, a walk through the narrow, picturesque streets of the historic centre will give you the opportunity to shop and immerse yourself in the typical Aeolian lifestyle. To discover the scenic beauty of Lipari Island, a bus tour is recommended. Departure from Lipari, brief navigation and arrival at Vulcano.

Vulcano, born from the fusion of "Vulcano della Fossa" and "Vulcanello", offers the possibility of enjoying a walk on Vulcanello or simply relaxing on the wonderful black beaches of very fine sand of volcanic origin. For trekking lovers, it is essential to climb the main crater of Vulcano, from where it is possible to admire a 360° panorama of the remaining islands. Finally, we recommend visiting "The Valley of the Monsters" and the "Horse Cave".

Return to Milazzo at approximately 5:45 p.m.

DAY 8 MILAZZO / CEFALU / CASTELBUONO / PALERMO

On the way to Palermo, visit Cefalù and Castelbuono.

Cefalù. Small fishing port with long beaches of golden sand, the cathedral stands out from the Norman domination, under the shadow of the large stone rock, shaped like a head (Cephaloedium), which gives its name to the city and on whose slopes is the Temple of Diana.

On the façade of the cathedral, two immense towers give it the air of a fortress, in the apse spectacular Byzantine mosaics with the Pantocrator of the Evangelizing Christ.

Continuation towards Castelbuono. There we will walk through the mountains to the Madonie national park. Located south of Cefalù, the park is Sicily's second natural resource and incorporates a number of typical villages and towns, where traditional customs prevail. A local tradition of particular interest is the use of manna, a whitish resin that falls from the ash trees when the bark is cut. The resin is typically used to sweeten local delicacies. We will stop to explore the medieval town of Castelbuono, which features a castle built in the 16th century that houses an ancient Palatine Chapel with sacred relics of Saint Anne, the patron saint of Castelbuono. A visit to this city would not be complete without tasting local cakes and pastries at the well-known "Pasticceria Fiasconaro".

At the end of the day, arrival in Palermo and accommodation.

DAY 9 PALERMO / MONREALE / PALERMO

Palermo is the capital of Sicily, the largest and most populated city and one of the most culturally rich in the Ancient Mediterranean. It has an uneven layout, with narrow streets, even the relatively important ones, and it is best to wander around and discover the surprises that each corner holds: the Cathedral, which was an early Christian basilica, an Arab mosque, and a Christian temple for the Normans, the Palatine Chapel of the Norman Palace, the Quattro Canti square where the two main roads of the city converge, Vittorio Emanuele and Via Maqueda. Here you can see four concave facades of 18th century buildings with statues of the four seasons, of the Spanish kings, and the four patron saints of Palermo. Visit also the Norman church of La Martorana or San Cataldo and on the other side of Vittorio Emanuele the Vucchiria market.

Very typical of Palermo is "Cibo da strada" or street food called "schiticcio" in Palermo dialect. In the city centre and near the Vucchiria market, there are many establishments of this type, where you can taste, for example, the Pani Ca Meusa, a Palermo sandwich par excellence, or the Arancine, (rice balls filled with stewed meat, cheese, spinach), the panelle or the sfincione

Departure towards Monreale.

The Benedictine monastery of Monreale, with its majestic cathedral and its cloister, represents the culmination of Arab-Norman art in Sicily. The cathedral of Monreale became the most important Norman building in Europe, while at the same time it represented a symbiosis of the application of Arab and European artistic works. The Medieval mosaics are the greatest of the entire Middle Ages. They used 2,200 kg of gold and covered almost 6,000 square meters of surface. They were not completed until 1182 and included Greek, Sicilian Byzantine and probably Venetian artists sent by the Pope for the later mosaics of the nave and walls. The cloisters of Monreale are part of the Benedictine monastery attached to the cathedral.

Return to Palermo and accommodation.

DAY 10 PALERMO / SEGESTA / ERICE / TRAPANI

SEGESTA is one of the best preserved 5th century BC Greek temples in the world. Surely because of its isolation on top of a hill, and because it has never been desecrated because it had not been completed, a roof was never put on it, and its columns remain raw, waiting to be fluted. In addition to the temple, following a path to Mount Bárbaro you reach the hill where the Greek theatre is located. Built in the second half of the 3rd century BC it faces north, contrary to what is usual in Greek theatres. This peculiarity is due to the dazzling view that the place offers of the hills and the Mediterranean Sea. Theatre performances take place in summer.

ERICE brings together many Sicilian features, such as Norman urban planning, the Arab organization of housing around the patio and a wide range of sweets. In Erice you live the Middle Ages in its cobbled streets and in the stones of its steep slopes. If the fog allows it, and the eyes are strained, the view from the top of Erice allows you to reach Tunisia. It is worth going around Erice through the quieter streets until you reach the castle and the communal gardens, Giardino del Balio, the cathedral Santa Maria della Assunta, from the 14th century, built under the reign of Frederick of Aragon. Erice is also known for its pastry shops where they make the famous “cannoli” like no one else and very tasty almond biscuits.

At the end of the day arrival in Trapani and accommodation.

DAY 11 TRAPANI / MARSALA / AGRIGENTO

Continuation of the trip to Agrigento. On the way visit Trapani and Marsala.

TRAPANI does not have the grandeur of Palermo or Catania, or the elegance of Syracuse, but it is certainly worth visiting. Famous for its salt lakes and for the procession of the Addolorata, the ancient Drepana, named by the Greeks for its sickle shape where the settlement was, preserves in its winding streets full of baroque facades, the essence of Sicily. An important Phoenician port, conquered by the different peoples who conquered the island, it was from the 9th century under the rule of the Muslims. Goldsmiths and coral artists promoted the seafaring activity of Trapani and the Arab influence has continued to this day in gastronomy.

MARSALA is located south of Trapani after leaving the salt lakes behind. Its name is known, either for Garibaldi's landing in Sicily, or for its renowned wines. They say that it was the most important Phoenician city with a six-meter wall that surrounded the city and pierced by countless underground passages that allowed escape in case of siege. In addition to the Old Town, full of shops selling typical products, we recommend strolling to the cathedral, or the Porta Nuova. Here you can see low houses, typical of a seaport, or palaces, and visit the circular church of Addolarata, the Tapestry Museum, or the Archaeological Museum.

Arrival in Agrigento and accommodation.

DAY 12 AGRIGENTO

The temples of Agrigento are all of Doric style and although their state of conservation varies depending on how earthquakes and looting affected them, it is worth not missing anything on the itinerary.

Dominating the summit of the Valley of the Temples is the temple of Juno; preceded by a large altar for sacrifices. It dates back to 450 BC. and preserves the northern row of columns and partially those on the other three sides. Through a cobbled path we will continue the journey to the Temple of Concordia. It is the best-preserved temple, 42 meters long by 19.5 meters wide and was built between 450 and 400 BC. Named after a Latin inscription found in its surroundings, it is very likely that it was dedicated to Castor and Pollux.

The Temple of Hercules is the oldest of the preserved temples in Agrigento, dating back to 510 BC. Restored in 1924, 8 of the 38 original columns stand on its base. Not far from the temple we will find the Tomb of Therón, a funerary monument from the 1st century BC, with a square plan crowned by a tower with blind doors carved in limestone and Doric columns crowned by Ionic capitals in the corners.

Temple of Olympian Jupiter, a gigantic building with a floor plan of 112.5 m long by 56 m wide that was never completed and whose dimensions were only surpassed by the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus. In addition to having columns 17 meters high and 4.2 meters in diameter, it was adorned with 38 statues of Atlantes almost 8 meters high, known as talamons. You can see a reproduction.

Behind the temple of Jupiter is the Temple of Castor and Pollux, rebuilt in the 19th century with combined elements from other temples. After its construction in the 5th century BC this temple of 34 columns was seriously damaged by the plundering of the Carthaginians and later by earthquakes.

The Temple of Vulcan still preserves two columns and the basement. The remains of its rich polychrome clay decoration are preserved in the archaeological museum.

Continuation to Favara for the cooking class at the home of a Sicilian chef.

DAY 13 AGRIGENTO / PIAZZA ARMERINA / CALTAGIRONE / SYRACUSE

Continuation of the trip to Syracuse and accommodation.

We recommend a stop in Piazza Armerina to visit the Roman Villa with its famous mosaics and Caltagirone, cradle of ceramic production.

PIAZZA ARMERINA is known worldwide for having the best preserved mosaics from the Roman period. The Villa del Casale (a few kilometres from Piazza Armerina) was the luxurious residence of Maximian who ruled the empire from 286 to 305.

The explanation for the surprising state of conservation of the Villa's mosaics is due in part to the care of the subsequent owners after the fall of the Roman Empire. In addition, a landslide in the 12th century (1161) covered the building, protecting it from the natural elements. (UNESCO Heritage).

In the afternoon we will visit Caltagirone, a noble city of ceramics where since prehistory there have been the most important workshops for making terracotta pieces. We will see, among other things, the

magnificent Scalinata di Santa Maria del Monte and we will also visit a traditional shop of a ceramist to follow the phases of the birth of a beautiful terracotta work.

DAY 14 SYRACUSE / NOTO / SYRACUSE

Cicero said about Archimedes' hometown, Syracuse, that it was the most beautiful city in the world. It has one of the richest archaeological heritages in Sicily, with the Ortigia peninsula, the original towncentre of the Corinthians who founded the city, and the archaeological park of Neápolis with its Roman Amphitheater, the Greek theater, the Latomias or stone quarries. , the Ear of Dionysus, and the Dei Cordari grotto, or that of the Capuchins, where in Greek times slaves extracted limestone blocks for the construction of buildings and walls. Next to the sea and emanating fresh water naturally, we will find the Aretusa Fountain, whose legend of love between the Nymph Aretusa and the God of the river Alfeo, adorns the place with mysticism.

The Ortygia peninsula preserves its pattern of courtyards, alleys and hidden squares, built with the elegance of the baroque, so notable in Eastern Sicily. Presiding over the Piazza del Duomo is the Cathedral of Syracuse with the columns of the ancient Greek temple still visible inside the church. Awe will also visit the Maniace Castle, a fortress built by Frederick II in 1239, in defence of the Syracusan peninsula.

Noto is the jewel of Sicilian baroque. It was named named by Cesare Brandi, “the Stone Garden”, and declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1996. It was built after the earthquake of January 1693 that devastated the eastern part of Sicily and also hit Noto Antica, the original medieval city. Thus, arose the opportunity to build a new Noto on the slope of the hill; it was designed, according to the baroque taste of the time, with parallel streets interspersed between squares that were planned as large stages, with stairs, terraces and slopes, creating a space of harmony between churches, palaces, convents and stone mansions that with the sun acquire a unique golden hue.

DAY 15 SYRACUSE RAGUSA MODICA SYRACUSE

Ragusa is an “island within the island” as those who know it well call it, as it is a province traditionally outside the urban movement of the crowded Palermo and Catania. The division of the city into Ragusa Ibla, the ancient city that suffered the earthquake of 1693 and was later rebuilt, and the new Ragusa. The houses are perched on the Iblea hill, struggling not to fall, clinging to the earth. Both offer churches, palaces, facades, etc. that are worth visiting.

The valley of S. Domenica, crossed by three bridges that link the Ragusa of the 16th century with that of the 19th century. The old bridge (currently open only to pedestrians) was built by a Cappuccino monk in 1835. Visit the cathedral of S. Giovanni Battista, the Collegio di Maria, the Palazzo Zacco, baroque, with richly decorated balcony corbels. the Carmine church, founded in 1560.

In Ragusa Ibla, you must see the church of S. Maria delle Scale or delle Cateratte, the Church della Madonna dell'Idria, rebuilt after the earthquake of 1693 on a previous church founded in 1629 by the order of the Cavalieri di Malta

MODICA, 20 km from Ragusa, is one of the most picturesque cities in the province and in all Sicily. It is located in the southern area of the Iblean Mountains and is divided into two original areas: Modica Alta

(Higher), and Modica Bassa (Lower). The baroque appearance makes it a unique and charming city, known by many different names and in which the Spanish presence is still evident in the dialect, gastronomy, etc. “City of a hundred churches”, “City of the Castle”, “city of two cities” These are some of the ways to name it. See the Palazzo Sortino Trono, rich in sculptures and massive corbels that support the four balconies. Among a group of baroque palaces appears the Duomo di S. Giorgio, the work of the Syracuse architect Rosario Gagliardi. Don’t forget to visit one of the many chocolate factories, producing a very particular kind of chocolate from an old an Aztec recipe.

DAY 16 SYRACUSE / CATANIA

Departure to Catania to board the flight back home.

END OF OUR SERVICES