

8 Days/7 Nights
Departs Daily from Palermo



BEST OF SICILY (SELF-DRIVE) **PALERMO - AGRIGENTO - RAGUSA - TAORMINA**

Sicily has been a crossroads of civilization for several millennia, and the record of its many ruling groups can be found in its architecture. Among the greatest sights are the classical Greek temples and theaters, built in the 5th century B.C. when Sicily was an important part of greater Greece.

ACCOMMODATIONS

2 Nights Palermo | 1 Night Agrigento | 1 Night Ragusa
3 Nights Taormina

INCLUSIONS

- Private Monreale and Cefalu Tour with Driver and local guide in Monreale from Palermo 7 Hours
- Private Old Girgenti Historic Agrigento Walking Tour 3 Hours
- Private Full Day Mt Etna and Barone di Villagrande Winery Tour with Lunch and Driver and Guide from Taormina 8 Hours
- Daily Breakfast
- Palermo Buatta Cucina Popolana 4 Course Dinner
- Private Walking Tour of Taormina 3 Hours
- 5 Day Compact Manual Car Rental



Day 1 ARRIVE PALERMO:

After arriving in Palermo, check into your hotel, then spend the afternoon exploring this capital of Sicily. Founded in the 8th century BC by Phoenicians, this city has known Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ostrogoth, Arab and Norman masters, and shows traces of many of these cultures. The street markets near the Piazza del Carmine or La Vucciria will give you a taste of daily life. You will see many of Palermo's important monuments on your city tour tomorrow. This evening, you will have dinner on your own.



Private Transfer - Palermo Airport to Palermo Hotel

Duration: 1 Hour

You will be met outside customs at Palermo Airport by an English speaking driver. You will then be escorted to your Palermo hotel.



Palermo - Hotel Piazza Borsa - Deluxe

2 Nights ★★★★★

Style: Traditional *Location:* Historical center

Nearby Attractions: Palazzo Gangi, San Francisco D'Assisi Basilica Palermo, Teatro Biondo, Vucciria
All of the attractions of Palermo squares, parks, monuments, shopping streets and much more can be found within 550 yards of the hotel. The windows of each room offer different points of view of the constantly changing heart of the town.

Day 2 PALERMO AND MONREALE:

Your guide will meet you in your hotel lobby for a private half day tour of Palermo and Monreale. You will first drive to Monreale, located on a small hill just outside Palermo. In the 9th century the Arabs captured Palermo and turned its cathedral into a mosque. The Bishop of Palermo fled to Monreale, where he built a small church to keep the flame of Christianity alive. 240 years later, the Normans drove the Arabs out, and made Monreale their new capital. A new cathedral was built there and dedicated in 1182. King William II employed both Christian and Arab artisans to decorate this cathedral; the result is a unique blending of styles unlike any other. The highlight is the stunning gold mosaic of Christ Pantocrator, covering the apse behind the altar. You'll never forget seeing this amazing representation of Christ. You should also see the Cloister, with 108 pairs of columns, each with a different mosaic pattern, plus a covered arcade of Arabic arches. Returning to Palermo, your English speaking guide will take you on a city tour, covering many of the highlights: the Norman Palace, the Palatine Chapel and the Cathedral. Completed in 1140, the Palatine Chapel inside the Palace is one of the finest examples of Arab Norman art anywhere, with its amazing mosaics reminiscent of those at Monreale. This evening, you will have a 3 course dinner at Gagini, an historic restaurant with candle lit tables, overlooking La Vucciria neighborhood. (Beverages not included)

(Breakfast, Dinner)



Private Monreale and Cefalu Tour with Driver and local guide in Monreale from Palermo 7 Hours

Duration: 7 Hours *Category:* Art and Culture, Historical *Tour Type:* Car/Bus Tour, Walking Tour

Meet your local guide and depart for Monreale. This lovely town situated on the hills surrounding the city of Palermo and famous for its Duomo Cathedral and Cloister. Your driver will then take you to the town of Cefalu, a lovely seaside resort known as one of the best kept examples of Norman architecture. You will have time to stroll in the historical centre, do some shopping in its narrow streets or sit by the beach tasting a delicious ice cream.

Palermo - Buatta Cucina Popolana - 4-Course Dinner

Tour Type: Meal

Enjoy a 4-course, authentic, Sicilian dinner at Buatta Cucina Popolana.



Day 3 PALERMO TO AGRIGENTO:

This morning after breakfast, you will pick up your rental car and drive south for two hours across the island to Agrigento and the splendid Valley of the Temples home to eight Greek temples built between 510 and 430 BC. This stunning collection of buildings will leave you thinking you're in Greece!

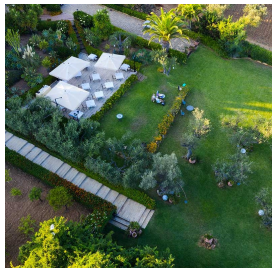
(Breakfast)



Rail Transportation



Day 3 AGRIGENTO:



Agrigento - Foresteria Baglio Della Luna - Classic 1 Nights ★★★★★

Style: Boutique, Traditional *Location:* Maddalusa Valle dei Templi

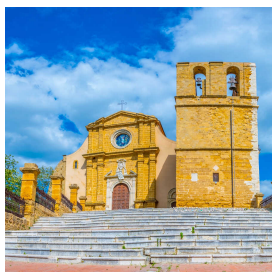
Nearby Attractions: Maddalusa Beach Teatro Luigi Pirandello

The Hotel Baglio della Luna Foresteria is a 13th century monastery where the original tower was restructured in 1555 and later transformed into a countryside residence in the 18th century. It is now a boutique hotel with 23 rooms and suites distributed between an ancient guesthouse and a medieval tower. The rooms are classically decorated with antique furnishings. Sitting on the veranda, overlooking the illuminated Valley of the Temples, makes every dinner in the hotel's restaurant a unique experience.

Day 4 AGRIGENTO TO RAGUSA:

After breakfast, you will meet your local guide for a four hour tour of the temples. Then you will take the 1.5 hour drive to Piazza Armerina, where you will have a private guided tour of the Villa del Casale a large Roman country villa with magnificent mosaics, some of the best preserved anywhere. It was covered by a landslide in the 12th century and only rediscovered at the beginning of the 20th century which accounts for its excellent state of preservation. After touring the Villa, you will take the 1.5 hour drive south to Ragusa, a town rebuilt after an earthquake in 1893, now almost entirely in the Baroque style. The town consists of two parts: Ragusa Superiore, sitting on a hilltop, and all newly built since the earthquake; and Ragusa Ibla, site of the original town, in the valley below. Both parts are worth exploring on foot for their architectural details and major buildings.

(Breakfast)



Private Old Girgenti - Historic Agrigento Walking Tour - 3 Hours

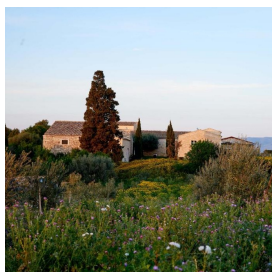
Duration: 3 Hours *Category:* City Tour, Historical *Tour Type:* Walking Tour

Meet your guide at the Church of San Calogero, situated on the corner of Viale della Vittoria, with a magnificent vista of the Valley of Temples. See the Church of Santa Maria dei Greci and St. Gerlando's Cathedral.



Italy's hilltop city of Ragusa in southeast Sicily is known for its old town filled with baroque buildings including the grand Duomo di San Giorgio, as well as the fountains, churches, and panoramic views that can be enjoyed from its public park, the Giardino Ibleo. The more modern section of Ragusa features the lavish Ragusa Cathedral and its museum of religious relics and art.

Day 4 RAGUSA:



Ragusa - Baglio Occhipinti - Standard 1 Nights ★★★★★

Style: Boutique, Traditional

Nearby Attractions: Biscari Castle

Baglio Occhipinti is a charming place where twelve rooms, renovated respecting the territory and original architecture, allow guests to live a complete experience of well being and regeneration. Here Nature is not only a backdrop, but it is the mother who generates the fruits to feed on. Baglio Occhipinti is also a totally organic farm, so the concept of well being starts from cultivation to arrive at the table in the rediscovery of traditional recipes.

Day 5 RAGUSA TO SIRACUSA:

After breakfast at your hotel, you'll drive 1 1/5 hours to Siracusa on Sicily's east coast. In ancient times, Siracusa was an important Greek city state, during certain periods as important as Athens. Archimedes was born here, and some of Sophocles' plays premiered here. There is a rich classical Greek heritage of temples and theaters, as well as a large Roman amphitheater and temples from a later period. You will have a private English speaking guide to give you a tour of the most important sites; this will last between 3 and 4 hours. The 5th century B.C. Greek theater has amazing acoustics, and is not to be missed. After finishing your tour, drive for 1 1/5 hours up the Ionian coast to Taormina, where you'll base for the last 3 nights of your vacation. Taormina sits at the foot of Mt. Etna the most active volcano in Europe, with frequent eruptions so the setting is pretty dramatic. Find your hotel and relax after a pretty full day.

(Breakfast)



Taormina is the most popular resort town in Sicily, and for good reason. Attentively set on gorgeous cliffs, it offers scenic views and crystal waters, both pairing nicely with the deluxe hotels. The town itself continues to maintain its medieval appeal despite the countless vendors and stalls. There are many things to do and see in Taormina and we've set up everything for you. Venture to the summit of Mt Etna, learn more about historic Siracusa and Agrigento or walk in the footsteps of the Godfather, we'll make sure to keep you busy. Enjoy your stay in true Italian fashion by pairing your meals with the best wines Sicily has to offer.

Day 5 TAORMINA:



Taormina - Hotel Villa Diodoro - Classic 3 Nights ★★★★★

Style: Traditional *Location:* Taormina city center

Nearby Attractions: Taormina Coast, Duke of Cesaro Park, Greek Theatre, Taormina Cable Car, Isola Bella

With more than a hundred years of tradition, the Villa Diodoro offers warm Sicilian hospitality in a classical environment. The hotel overlooks Mt. Etna and the Ionian Sea and is only a few minutes from the historic center of town with its restaurants and shopping.

Day 6 TAORMINA:

After breakfast, your English speaking guide will meet you at your hotel for a private walking tour of Taormina lasting between 3 and 4 hours. Perched on a rocky promontory above the sea, Taormina has been the most popular tourist destination in Sicily for over two centuries, and has attracted writers, artists and movie stars to sojourn there. The town has beautifully restored medieval buildings and breathtaking views from almost every vantage point. As with much of Sicily, you can see evidence of its Greek origins as well as later occupations by the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, French, Germans and Spanish, over the centuries. By far the main attraction is the Greco Roman Theater, in a spectacular setting with views of Mt. Etna and of the sea. After your tour, you'll have the afternoon free before having a three course dinner at Ristorante La Piazzetta, in a courtyard setting and featuring local fish (beverages not included).

(Breakfast)



Private Walking Tour of Taormina - 3 Hours

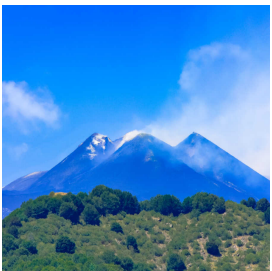
Duration: 3 Hours *Category:* City Tour *Tour Type:* Walking Tour

Your guide will meet you at your hotel. Visit of this lovely resort town with its famous Greek Theater offering stunning views over the sea.

Day 7 TAORMINA:

Today is a free day for optional excursions. You can take a cable car down to one of the beautiful beaches; or take a drive along the coastline and admire the many attractive offshore islands in this area. There are also handicraft shops in Taormina that offer typical local products.

(Breakfast)



Private Full Day Mt Etna and Barone di Villagrande Winery Tour with Lunch and Driver and Guide from Taormina 8 Hours

Duration: 8 Hours *Category:* Adventure/Active, Eco/Nature, Food and Drink *Tour Type:* Car/Bus Tour

Today you will enjoy dramatic views, and stop from time to time to look at what makes Etna an other worldly place, like a house trapped in the lava, or to take an easy hike on the edge of an extinguished side crater being an active volcano, access to the main craters is obviously forbidden. Once your experience on Mt Etna is concluded, head for the Barone di Villagrande Estate, where the Nicolosi family has been training native vines since the 17th century.

Day 8 DEPART TAORMINA:

After breakfast at your hotel, drive 45 minutes to Catania, where you will drop your rental car, before continuing on to your next Avanti adventure.

(Breakfast)

