

Exploring Authentic Sicily

Sept 15th – 25th, 2022

www.Toursbysierra.com

“Sicilians build things like they will live forever & eat like they will die tomorrow. “ - Plato

Sicily is a delight to visit & I love the blend of sea & medieval architecture. Sicily has some of the most ancient remains in all of Europe. An island of delicious Sicilian cuisine & vineyards, what's not to like! Sicilians have a reason to be proud of their homeland!



This is the largest island in the Mediterranean & largest of Italy's democratic republic political regions. 9,927 square miles contains a feast of archeological ruins of the Normans, Arabs & legacies of the Italian Middle Ages, Greek Temples, Romans Theaters dating back to the 6th century BC. The Mosaic masterpieces will leave you in awe. Surrounded by Tyrrhenian, Mediterranean & Ionian Seas, we will be viewing all of them.

Wed. Oct 19: Arrive at Catania airport on the Ionian side. Shuttle provided to lodging on island of Ortygia, an hour drive. Our hotel is located in the historical district & Piazza del Duomo, Sicily's most spectacular masterpiece of baroque architecture. The Greek temple is the oldest in Sicily. A 13th century castle is within walking distance. My favorite activity is dinner on the patio with musicians & the evening glow of Piazza del Duomo.

Thurs. Oct 20: A privately guided food, wine & historical tour of Ortygia & Siracusa on the Ionian Sea. The rest of the day is yours to explore your own interests.

Fri. Oct 21: We set out for Valley of the Temples, all UNESCO sites. It will be a busy day after our time of unwinding. The medieval city of Noto is a half hour drive. We have an hour & half guided walking tour to help us appreciate the significance of the destruction from the earthquake in 1693 and the rebuilding of this city in the 1700's. It is a showpiece and you feel like you are walking into a movie set. Yummy pastries in this town for a mid-morning refreshment break.





Lunch, 45 min away in Modica, in the Hyblean Mts & famous for its chocolate, (dessert!), produced locally & inspired by an ancient Aztec recipe for Xocolati. Free time to explore.

A short 18 min drive to one of the most picturesque towns in Sicily, Ragusa, for the night. Also in the Hablean Mts, it is renowned for its artistic beauty. Our stay is close to the historic center which is lit at night with a gold glow on a spectacular Baroque Duomo di San Giorgio.

Sat. Oct 22: After breakfast, a short distance drive to the 14th century Donna Fugata Castle, (castellodonnaufugate.org) with its mysterious legends. A few minutes drive to Villa Romana del Casale, a UNESCO site, with 50 rooms, it is one of the largest & richest spectacular display of exquisite mosaics outside of Rome.

(www.villaromanadelcasale.it). Go to website home page, scroll down and watch the video. Some of the mosaics represent skinny women in bikinis with a weight in each hand that look like they belong in the 21st century.

After lunch we travel 1 ½ hr. drive to the ruined city of Akragas, 4th largest city of the ancient world, near Agrigento. We have a private guided tour of the Valley of the Temples dating from 510 BC to 430 BC & among the 800 yr old olive grove. Temple della Concordia, 430 BC, is one of the best preserved & survived the earthquake of 1693. Temple of Hera, built in 5th century.



Enough of ruins for one day & on to wine country, Marsala, a two hour drive up the Mediterranean coast. Marsala, founded by the Phoenicians in 397BC was conquered by the Arabs in 830AD and named Marsa Allah (Port of God).. Its reputation now is for sweet dessert wine so we must have “wine tasting” among the marble streets. On to Trapani & our lodgings for two nights lodging on the beach.

Mon. Oct 23: A 10 min Cable car up the mountain to the medieval walled village of Erice, overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea in the Gulf of Trapani. Free time to wander the cobblestone streets visit Venus Castle, lunch & dessert at Sicily's most famous pastry shop.

Www.caffe-maria-erice.it.

An afternoon drive to Segesta, an ancient city of the Trojans with the well-preserved Doric Temple and the ruins of a prominent Greek Theater. Back to Tropani to enjoy wine tasting and the beach.

Tues. Oct 24: Off to Palermo for a two night stay. Sicily's capital & once the city of aristocrats. Meet up with our guide for a food & historical tour. Free time remaining of the day.

Wed. Oct 25: Free morning. Mid afternoon, after the crowds have dispersed, we can drive up the slope of Monte Caputo to the hill-top town of Monreale, 12th century, famous for its mosaics in the Norman Cathedral. Enjoy the ambiance for dinner, away from busy Palermo.

Thurs. Oct 26: Leaving Palermo for Taormina, we drive for 50 min along the Tyrrhenian sea for a break at the seaside resort of Cefalu and its Norman-Arab architectural masterpieces. Perfect spot for lunch. On to Taormina, 2 ½ hr drive. We have 3 nights in Taormina, within view of Mt. Etna. Although a popular tourist hot spot, we are at the tail-end of tourist season & there is so much to enjoy here, including the beaches on the Ionian Sea. We will arrive late afternoon, check into Villa Sirami & explore Corso Umberto I, a pedestrian street full of shops, restaurants & sea views.



Fri. Oct 27: Taormina, 4th century BC enjoyed prosperity under the Greek & Roman rule until it was conquered by the Normans in 1087. When it was discovered by the Europeans in the 18th century, life & prosperity were restored. To really help us appreciate the value of this region, we have a 2 hr. guided tour including the Greek Theater, 3rd century BC, still used for international arts & film

festivals. On our own, we will take a bus up the mountain to Castelmola, my favorite in the area. There is a castle which sits on the site of an ancient Greek acropolis. The views are spectacular!



Sat. Oct 28 min drive to Savoca, a medieval village in the foothills of the Pelorani Mts. Coppola's Godfather was filmed here. The highlight: Bar Vitelli & a scene with Al Pacino. Sitting on the patio, we can view the 14th century Chiesa di Santa Lucia where Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) marries Apollonia. Afternoon, cable car to the beach. Evening meet up to say "Arrivederci".

Sun. Oct 29: Transportation to Catania airport for those who plan to depart for home or travel on.

See Website for Trip Insurance & Cancellation Policy

Trip Details: Max of 8 travelers.

Cost: \$1550/double. Add \$275 for single. **Deposit:** \$300. Balance due: July 1, 2022.

No refunds after that date unless space fills, minus deposit.

Includes: 10 nights lodging, ground transportation, 10 breakfasts, 2 Food Tours, 5 guided sightseeing tours with local guides, 1 wine tastings, arriving & departing airport shuttle transfer.

Does not include: tips for guides or flights to Sicily.

Payment Methods: Tours by Sierra, P.O. Box 912, Green Valley, AZ 85622. Zelle or (credit card add 3%)

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