

Southern Italy *with Sicily*



Day 01 Depart home city for Palermo, Sicily

Day 02 Palermo **D**

Arrival in the historical city of **Palermo** - the Capitol and largest city in **Sicily**. Palermo's cathedral, known officially as "**Santa Maria Assunta**" (Our Lady of the Assumption), is the site scholars believe a temple existed in Roman times. Arab records mention the existence of a large temple on this site when they conquered Palermo in 831. Panorama city tour on route to our hotel. Remainder of day at leisure, dinner at hotel.

Day 03 Palermo - Monreale - Cefalu

BD

Morning city tour of **Palermo** featuring the **Quattro Canti**, highlights include the monumental 16th century **Pretoria Fountain**, **Piazza Bellini** with its 3 churches - St. Caterina 16th c, St. Cataldo 12th c (at the base of it's foundation are the remains of a Roman wall), & **Martorana** (St. Mary's of the Admiral, built in honor of George of Antioch), a masterpiece of Norman art dating back to 1143. Continue to the famous **Benedictine Abbey of Monreale** (where King William II is portrayed crowned by Christ in a mosaic wall panel). Afternoon, visit Cefalu, small fishing town famous for it's magnificent Romanesque Cathedral. **Tonight, a festive Welcome Dinner in a local restaurant, a celebration of life.**

Day 04 Selinute - Marsala- Agrigento

BL

Morning departure along the western coast to tranquil and scenic **Selinunte**, known as the "Acropolis, situated on high land overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Stop at a local wine estate for lunch wine tasting in the area of **Marsala**, known for their sweet wine. Proceed to **Agrigento**, a picturesque town built on a hillside facing the sea for dinner and overnight.

Day 05 Agrigento - Taormina

BD

Morning visit of the **Valley of the Temples** including the Temple of **Zeus** - the Underworld featuring the 5th century BC **Temple of Castor and Pollux**, the **Temples of Hercules and Concord** - the perfectly proportioned and best preserved of all existing Greek temples and the Temple of Hera (Juno) standing alone in splendid solitude. Continue to **Taormina**, "*Queen of the Mediterranean*" forming a balcony overlooking the sea at the foothills of **Mt. Etna**. Upon arrival, enjoy a **panoramic city tour** via Piazza Vittorio Emanuele on the side of the Roman Forum, and the recently unearthed remains of the Imperial Roman Baths, the Greek Theatre. On to the Piazza IX Aprile to the gate of the Torre dell' Orologio which leads to the medieval part of town. On the Piazza del Duomo is the majestic 13 C Norman Cathedral. Dinner at our splendid hotel.

Day 06 Siracusa - Mt. Etna - Taormina

BD

Morning excursion to **Siracusa**, the ancient capital of the Greek Empire of **Magna Graecia** to visit the most important ancient monuments such as the **Parco Archeologico della Napoli** with the **Roman & Greek Theatre**. Latomia del Paradiso with the *Ear of Dionysius* - an enormous artificial cave with unusual acoustic properties. This afternoon, upon our return to Taormina, take a beautiful drive up to the mighty **Mt. Etna**, the largest active volcano in Europe. The French writer Guy De Maupassant wrote - A man should not have to pass but one day in Sicily and he would ask, "What do I need to see?" I should reply to him with no hesitation ... "**Taormina.**" Dinner - local restaurant

Day 07 Messina - Celico - Cosenza

BD

Today we continue our journey to the mainland of Italy as we ferry across the blue green waters of the **Strait of Messina** and make our way north along the coast of Calabria to the small village of Celico. Lunch on your own to explore this typical quaint village. Home cooked dinner at our hotel and overnight in Cosenza, Calabria

Day 08 Cosenza - Sorrento

BD

Leisurely morning in **Cosenza** to mingle with members of the town. After lunch on our own, we continue to the unforgettable resort town of **Sorrento** high above the **Bay of Naples**, passing through hundreds of acres of orange and lemon trees with a view of towering **Vesuvius**. This splendid surrounding is the ideal place for singing "**Torna a Sorrento**" and **dance the "Tarantella"**. Relaxing dinner at our hotel.

Day 09 Amalfi Coast - Sorrento

BD

This morning, our adventure continues along the **Amalfi Coast**, the 'corniche' road following the rocky coast between Sorrento and Salerno famous for sun, songs and **pizza**. It's innumerable bends afford constantly changing views or enchanting landscape and a fabulous panoramic view from the cliffs above, featuring one of the **most romantic** bays in the world. Afternoon at leisure to wander the quaint streets, shop for the famous blue ceramics and inlaid wood that originate from this area. Dinner tonight at a wonderful restaurant to experience the local people.

Day 10 Capri - Sorrento

BD

Morning excursion to the **Isle of Capri** - "Pearl of the Gulf of Naples." This isle of everyone's dreams, encircled by crystal clear deep blue waters. Our tour of the island includes **Anacapri**, where life centers around the **Piazza della Victoria**. Visit **Villa San Michele** famous gardens. Remainder of the day at leisure. Perhaps let a hydrofoil whisk you away to the romantic **Blue Grotto** (on your own), take time to enjoy the quaint shops, taste a homemade **Lemoncello** or enjoy a café latte as you watch the "beautiful people" go by. Dinner in Sorrento.

Day 11 Pompeii - Rome

BD

Morning departure for the "**Eternal City of Rome**" built on 7 hills. On route, visit the splendid and fascinating city of **Pompeii**, buried in 79 AD under the ashes of erupting **Mt. Vesuvius**. You will be amazed as you walk through the Roman Forum and the Market Place. The narrow streets and luxurious villas of this sumptuous town are literally frozen in time. After lunch (on our own), we continue towards Rome, Cradle of **Western Civilization**. Upon arrival, enjoy a panorama city tour of this glorious city, including the Coliseum. Relax over dinner at our hotel.

