

Sicily – The Classical Isle

Tour Code SC

Departing 4 August 2010

An in-depth exploration of the historic island of Sicily, whose strategic location has attracted great civilisations since the ancient times. Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Normans, Arabs and Spaniards have all left their legacy on this magical land at the crossroads of the Mediterranean. The Sicilian landscape is quite breathtaking, particularly at this time of year when its diverse range of flowers are in bloom and its stunning topography includes the still snow capped Mount Etna. We will also be able to sample some of the locally produced food and wine that has made Sicily so gastronomically famous!



Doric Temple, Agrigento
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ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Catania. Drive to Syracuse – Wednesday 4 August

Morning departure for our direct flight from London Gatwick with Air Malta to Catania. On arrival we drive to Syracuse and transfer to the Roma hotel for two nights. A welcome dinner has been arranged at a local restaurant (D)

Day 2 In Syracuse – Thursday 5 August

Once the rival of Athens as the most important city in the western world, Syracuse has architectural and archaeological treasures that date back some 2,700 years. This morning our visits include the excellent Archaeological Museum and impressive 3rd century BC Greek theatre. In the afternoon we have a walking tour through Ortigia, the historic centre of the city, with its fine baroque palaces, churches and magnificent cathedral. There will also be free time to explore the town on your own (B)

Day 3 Visit Piazza Armerina. Drive Agrigento – Friday 6 August

We drive through the interior of Sicily to reach the charming Caltagirone, the centre for Sicilian pottery and ceramics. After a walk through the city we head to Piazza Armerina to visit the Roman Villa del Casale, a former hunting lodge of an important Roman official, with its fine and extensive 4th century AD mosaics. We continue to Agrigento. Dinner at a local trattoria followed by a panoramic tour to admire the illuminated temples. Overnight at the Dioscuri Bay Palace hotel (B,D)

Day 4 Visit Agrigento. Drive to Palermo – Saturday 7 August

This morning we have a guided tour through the Valley of the Temples, a magnificent cluster of Doric columned temples superbly situated overlooking the Mediterranean and the excellent Agrigento museum. Later we drive to the wonderfully located town of Sant'Angelo, famous for home-made *Sicilian Pizza* and *Pane Cunsatu* (a typical homemade bread with olive oil and pecorino cheese). We continue to Palermo. Three nights at the Mercure Palermo hotel (B)

Patrick Syder Travel

Escorted Cultural Tours – Zenobia House, 23 Bowmans Close, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3SR
Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1903 879737 email: info@sydertravel.com www.sydertravel.com

Day 5 In Palermo – Sunday 8 August

We start the day with an excursion to the magnificent 12th century Cathedral of Monreale, a Norman masterpiece with an unrivalled interior of gilded mosaics. In the afternoon we explore the old city of Palermo, including the superb Palatine Chapel of the Royal palace, decorated with Byzantine mosaics, and the church of San Giovanni, a fine example of Norman-Arab architecture. Dinner at a typical Palermo restaurant (B,D)

Day 6 Visit Segesta and Erice – Monday 9 August

We journey to Western Sicily today via the extraordinary landscape of saltpans and Dutch-style windmills known as the Salini, where natural sea salt has been produced by traditional methods since Norman times. We visit the ruins of Segesta, famed for its 5th century BC Doric temple built on a hilltop with commanding views across the ancient city and surrounding area. We continue to a local winery and lunch today is at a farmhouse famous for its olive oil. In the afternoon we reach Erice, a dramatic medieval hill town with narrow streets (B,L)

Day 7 Visit Cefalu. Drive to Taormina – Tuesday 10 August

We spend the morning in Cefalu with its stunning Norman cathedral and ruined ancient acropolis overlooking the town. The old town is still medieval in character and we have a walking tour through its narrow cobbled streets before continuing to Taormina. Renowned for its magnificent location overlooking the sea and a commanding view of Etna, Taormina provides the perfect climax to our tour with its atmospheric medieval old town and captivating charm. Three nights stay at the Villa Diodoro, wonderfully located in the centre of the old town (B)

Day 8 Etna Volcano excursion – Wednesday 11 August

Today we travel by jeep through the Etna area to witness the geological phenomena that has shaped this wonderful island and the features that it has formed. We are able to enjoy a light lunch to taste typical Sicilian dishes and further off-road driving through gorges and across lava flows in the afternoon before returning to Taormina (B,L)

Day 9 In Taormina – Thursday 12 August

The day is left free to enjoy the delights of this charming town perhaps starting with the spectacular setting of the Greco-Roman theatre with its commanding views across to Etna. Tonight we gather for a farewell dinner has been arranged at a typical local restaurant (B,D)

Day 10 Drive to Catania airport. Fly London – Friday 13 August

We have an early transfer to Catania airport this morning for our direct flight with Air Malta to London Gatwick arriving mid morning (B)

Cost £1795.00 per person in a twin room (excluding international flights)

Single supplement charge £250.00

Price includes -

- ▶ Tour accompanied from London by Patrick Syder
- ▶ A specialist Sicilian guide throughout the tour
- ▶ All transportation in private a/c coach
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ Quality four star hotels with specified lunches and dinners
- ▶ All departure taxes
- ▶ All airport transfers
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities

Not included – travel insurance, non-specified lunches and dinners, drinks, guide and driver gratuities, Air Malta international return flight (available with Polani Travel ATOL No.5311 or direct with Air Malta from £200.00)



Snow capped Mount Etna
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