

SICILY AND ITS ANCIENT EASTER TRADITIONS



Day 1: PALERMO – night in Palermo

Arrival at Palermo airport. Individual transfers to the hotel in the city centre. Leisure time. Overnight stay.

Day 2: PALERMO AND MONREALE – night in Palermo

After breakfast, the morning is dedicated to the discovery of Palermo's historical centre. Meet your English-speaking guide in the hotel lobby to explore the city centre. Your visit includes a walking tour in the old town to admire the **Cathedral**, the **Quattro Canti**, the enormous renaissance fountain of **Piazza Pretoria**, the red Arabic domes of the church of San Cataldo, and the baroque church of Santa Caterina. Enjoy a visit to one of the local historical Sicilian food markets and walk following the strong smell of spices and fried food. Taste the typical "panelle" with a generous sesame bread roll or "pani cà meusa", tasty traditional Sicilian "street food", for the more adventurous. Born with the Arabs, Sicilian ancient markets preserve their Arab roots intact in contemporary Sicilian culture. The displays of fresh fruit, oranges above all, exotic products, spices and olives will remind you of middle-eastern markets. Wonderful are the ample fish trays with large swordfish that dominate the scene. The last stage of this truly Sicilian experience will be a *street food lunch*. We will leave in the afternoon for Monreale to admire its majestic Cathedral, a pearl of Arab Norman art, where biblical stories are represented with unique mosaic works on the walls and ceiling all accented in gold leaf. Then it's back to Palermo. Dinner at your leisure. Overnight stay.

Day 3: PALERMO → ERICE → MISTERI DI TRAPANI (THE PASSION) - night in Trapani

Leave for Erice after breakfast. Erice is a lovely medieval town atop the mountain for which it's named. It was founded by the Phoenicians and dedicated to Venus, the Goddess of Love. Have a guided tour of the town, taste the local almond pastries and enjoy the beautiful view of the Egadi Islands. Have lunch in Erice and proceed to Trapani to experience the "**Misteri di Trapani**", a day long procession featuring twenty floats of lifelike wood, and canvas sculptures of individual scenes depicting the passion and the culmination of the Holy Week in Trapani. The "Misteri" are amongst the oldest continuously running religious events in Europe, having been played every Good Friday since Easter of 1612. It's the longest religious festival in Italy and runs for at least 16 continuous hours; sometimes it's been known to run well beyond 24 hours.

Dinner at your leisure. Overnight stay in a peaceful estate and winery situated on a hill overlooking the coast of Trapani and the enchanting landscape of the Salt Pans Natural Reserve.

Day 4: SALT ROUTE AND WINERY - night in Agrigento area

After breakfast, proceed to Marsala area via the spectacular "Salt Route", a captivating road bordered by the glittering ponds of the salt pans, windmills, and the "salt houses" (piles of salt covered with tiles) ... (here they still extract the sea salt as the Phoenicians did!). Take a boat excursion to the isle of **Mothia**, an ancient Phoenician colony where you will visit the archaeological area and the Whitaker's museum, hosting the famous Young Man from Motya. Continue with a visit to the small salt museum and enjoy a very special light lunch: A salt-tasting accompanied by local products.

Then you'll move to Agrigento with a stop in a winery known for its Marsala to enjoy a tasting of local wine. Dinner at your leisure. Overnight stay in the Agrigento area in a restored farmhouse with its own orchard or in a nice hotel located a short distance from the Valley of the Temples.

Day 5: EASTER BREAD BOWS AND VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES – night in Agrigento area

Leave after breakfast for San Biagio Platani, a little hamlet located among the Sicani Mountains in the province of Agrigento, to experience one of the most striking Sicilian celebration during Easter period. Every year, Corso Umberto I (the main road through town) is adorned with Easter Arches and Bread Bows, using bamboo, willow or agave canes. The arches are decorated and enriched with "mosaics" made with natural materials including vegetables, cereals, dates, pasta and bread. Lunch at your leisure. Leave in the afternoon for the **Valley of the Temples**, a UNESCO World Heritage site and the largest area of Greek vestiges beyond Greece. Return to your accommodation. Dinner at your leisure and overnight stay.

Day 6: AGRIGENTO → PIAZZA ARMERINA → RAGUSA AREA – night in Ragusa area

Depart for Piazza Armerina after breakfast and visit the **Roman Villa del Casale**, built in the first quarter of the 4th century, containing the richest, largest and best-preserved collection of Roman mosaics in the world, portraying mythological and daily life. Lunch enroute in a restaurant located in an ancient "Feudo", plunged in the countryside between Piazza Armerina and Caltagirone. Enjoy the visit of the estate and take time to relax after lunch. In the afternoon, proceed towards your hotel in the Hyblean countryside. Dinner at your leisure and overnight stay.

Day 7: MODICA AND RAGUSA IBLA - night in Ragusa area

After breakfast, visit the Sicilian Baroque area, a UNESCO World Heritage site, rich with seven baroque towns. You'll start in **Modica**, the town of 100 churches, for a walking tour of the town and a taste of the famous Modician chocolate. History of the local chocolate dates back to the 15th century, when the Spaniards dominating Sicily brought chocolate seeds from Mexico and taught the locals how to use them according to the Aztec traditions. Have lunch in our favourite trattoria in Modica and proceed to **Ragusa Ibla** in the afternoon. Ragusa Ibla is definitely a jewel of architecture with its medieval roads, churches and palaces that, decorated with burlesque masks and golden stone laces, are beautiful examples of late-Baroque style architecture. Return to the hotel. Dinner at your leisure and overnight stay.

Day 8: TRUFFLE HUNTING AND COOKING CLASS EXPERIENCE – night in Ragusa area

After breakfast, enjoy an amazing experience where a local truffle hunter will introduce you to the magical world of truffles. Breathe in the pure air of the gorgeous woods while hunting in the charming Sicilian countryside and the haunting beauty of the Iblei Mountain Forest. Later, transfer to another charming location; an ancient watermill, surrounded by the river, falls and small lakes to enjoy a cooking class. Guided by the expertise of the chef, learn, hands-on, how to prepare the traditional "Tagliatelle". During your cooking class, enjoy a ricotta cheese demonstration, where a dairyman will explain how to work with sheep's milk to create delicious ricotta and other typical Sicilian cheeses.

Then, have lunch with "Tagliatelle al Tartufo" in the relaxing peace of the terrace, surrounded by the breathtaking view of the falls and the smooth sound of the river in the background. A selection of Sicilian wines completes the menu.

Return to your accommodation. Dinner at your leisure and overnight stay.

Day 9: SIRACUSA – night in Etna area

After breakfast, leave for Syracuse, the town of the Greek myth. Visit the archaeological area: the Greek theatre, the Roman amphi-theatre, the Altar of Hieron II, and the Ear of Dionysius. Proceed to Ortigia and have a walking tour of the island, including a visit of its lively street market and a stop in our favorite deli shop to enjoy a tasting of local charcuterie and cheese products and a few glasses of wine. In the afternoon proceed towards the Etna area and the resort accommodation situated on the slopes of the volcano. Dinner at hotel and overnight stay.

Day 10: ETNA → TAORMINA – night in Etna area

After breakfast, have an exclusive excursion on Mount Etna, the highest active volcano in Europe at 10,991 ft, including a short walk on the old lava flows. The slopes of Mt. Etna are home to the finest vineyards on the island, so we'll stop for lunch in a local winery and have a guided wine tasting accompanied by a light lunch of local products. Return to the hotel for some rest. Later in the evening, around 5:00pm, proceed to Taormina to visit the Greek Theatre and enjoy a pleasant walk in the lovely city centre. It's quite simple to fall in love with Taormina, thanks to its majestic setting. The city is perched on a rocky promontory that features a wonderful view over the sea and the valley. Farewell dinner in one of our favorite restaurants in Taormina. Back to the hotel and overnight stay.

Day 11: CATANIA AIRPORT

After breakfast, meet your English-speaking driver for individual transfers to the airport.



The order of the visits and activities may change due to technical reasons. The overall content of the program will be preserved.

SICILY AND ITS ANCIENT EASTER TRADITIONS - 17th – 27th April 2019

Quote per person sharing a double room – booking deadline 10th Jan 2019

From 10 to 14 participants	€ 2.650,00	Single use supplement	€ 420,00
From 15 to 20 participants	€ 2.350,00	Single use supplement	€ 420,00
From 21 to 30 participants	€ 2.150,00	Single use supplement	€ 420,00

Including:

- 10 days private first-class coach and driver for the whole program
- 10 days English speaking authorized guide for the whole program
- 2 nights in Palermo city centre at Htl Piazza Borsa or similar
- 1 night in Trapani at Baglio Soria or similar
- 2 nights in Agrigento at Fontes Episcopi or Htl Costa Azzurra or similar
- 3 nights in Ragusa at hotel Poggio del Sole or similar
- 2 nights in Etna area at hotel Talè or similar
- 10 breakfasts in hotel;
- Meals and tastings as per program:
 - Street food lunch in Palermo
 - Lunch in restaurant in Erice
 - Salt tasting + wine tasting in Marsala area
 - Lunch in a winery in Ragusa area
 - Chocolate tasting in Modica
 - Lunch in restaurant in Modica
 - "Tagiatelle" cooking class with truffles lunch
 - Tasting/light lunch in Ortigia market
 - n. 1 dinner in hotel in Etna area
 - Wine tasting + light lunch in a winery on Mount Etna
 - Farewell dinner in Taormina
- Visits and entrance fees per program, tips included:
 - Palatine Chapel in Palermo
 - Monreale Cathedral
 - Salt Museum and Mothya
 - Valley of the Temples in Agrigento
 - Roman Villa del Casale in Piazza Armerina
 - Siracusa Archeological Park and Cathedral
 - Taormina Greek Theatre
- Lodging and meals for driver and guide;
- Parking;
- Local City Taxes;
- VAT

Not Including:

- Flights
- Drinks
- Entrance fees not specified
- Everything not mentioned as included
- Private arrival and departure Transfers to be booked on request at least one week before arrival:
 - € 70,00 per car 1/2 pax from Palermo airport
 - € 110,00 per car 1/2 pax to Catania airport

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Booking: Please fill in the reservation form and send it to our e-mail address within Jan 10th.

Payment A deposit of 30% will be required at time of booking, to be paid by bank transfer or credit card with 2% surcharge.

Balance required 30 days before arrival.

NOTE: The tour is guaranteed with a minimum of 10 participants.

Cancellation Policy: any cancellation should be made in writing by e-mail.

Following penalties will apply for cancellations made:

- 1) up to 60 days before arrival date 30%
- 2) from 59 to 31 days before arrival date: 50%
- 3) from 30 to 15 days before arrival date: 75%
- 4) from 15 to 1 day before arrival date: 100%
- 5) no show: 100% of the entire stay

Cancellation insurance can be added by request at 7% of tour cost.