

THE TRAVEL CLUB

Pre-departure Itinerary

Classic Sicily

Saturday, April 30 – Sunday, May 8, 2022

“THE GORGEOUS ISLAND OF SICILY CONTINUES TO SEDUCE TRAVELLERS WITH ITS DAZZLING DIVERSITY OF LANDSCAPES AND CULTURAL TREASURES.”—*Lonely Planet*. Join us this Spring as we explore Sicily—from the most famous of all Italian resort towns—Taormina—to the storied streets of Palermo. An ancient town perched high above blue seas and decorated with blazing red bougainvillea framing white-washed buildings, Taormina is Sicily's jewel. During our stay we'll enjoy a guided walking tour and a visit to Catania for a stop at the open air market and lunch and wine tasting on the slopes of Mount Etna. We'll visit the picture-perfect town of Erice and travel the famous Salt Road. Explore the Valley of the Temples archaeological site in Agrigento—the most important testimony of ancient, classical culture in Sicily—and stop in Piazza Armerina to see the mosaics of the Roman villa.

RATES

\$3,459 per person double occupancy

INCLUDES round-trip airfare, fuel surcharge and fees.

Single supplement is \$415. We have a limited number of single supplements available at just \$350. Call to reserve. Triple accommodations may be available upon request. Fuel surcharge, air taxes and fees subject to change. Passport required. Per person deposit is \$300.

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INCLUDES

- Round-trip regularly scheduled ITA Airlines flights from Boston to Catania and Palermo to Boston, via Rome
- Seven nights' three- and four-star accommodations
- Welcome beverage at the hotel
- Fourteen meals: seven breakfasts, three lunches, four dinners with wine
- Escorted, private, round-trip airport/ hotel transfers
- Services of professional local Tour Manager

ACCOMMODATIONS

DAY 1 Overnight flight from Boston

DAYS 2–4 Hotel **Continentale**, Taormina

DAY 5 Hotel **Dela Valle**, Agrigento

DAYS 6–8 Hotel **Al Madarig**, Castellammare del Golfo

DAY 9 Return flight to Boston

FEATURES

Full-day excursion to Palermo and Monreale. Excursion to Erice, the Salt Road, admission to the Salt Museum, Segesta and the Greek Temple and lunch at Trattoria del Sale. Agrigento: walking tour of Valley of the Temples. Stop in Piazza Armerina to see Roman villa. Taormina guided walking tour including the Greek-Roman Theatre. Excursion to Catania with visit to open air market, lunch with wine at the Estate of Barone di Villagrande on slopes of Mt. Etna.

Day 1: Overnight flight from Boston to Catania, via Rome

Day 2: Arrive Rome – connecting flight to Catania – hotel check-in

After passport control and immigration, proceed to baggage claim. Pass through customs and meet our **Tour Manager**, who will assist with boarding the transfer coach to **Hotel Continentale in Taormina**. Stop for a lovely lunch at a lemon farm where good food and wine will be served in an historic barn. Enjoy a welcome beverage on arrival and dinner with wine at a local restaurant. **(L,D)**

Hotel Continental

The Continental is a welcoming 3 star hotel in central Taormina located just steps from Corso Umberto and Piazza Duomo Square and several outstanding historic sites, traditional shops and restaurants. Located in the heart of Taormina, the hotel boasts a spacious terrace with breathtaking panoramic views across the beautiful Bay of Naxos and Mount Etna. The Ancient Theatre, the Odeon, the Naumachie and the other main tourist attractions and historical sites can be reached via a leisurely stroll through the old town's picturesque streets. This nice hotel is the best choice for a great holiday in Sicily thanks to its comfortable rooms and welcoming spaces. Hotel facilities also include an Internet point and wireless Internet access, both available at the reception, and a lounge bar. Several restaurants, cafés and bars are located within walking distance.



Day 3: Taormina

After breakfast we'll meet with **our guide** for a half-day walking tour of **Taormina**, one of the most popular tourist capitals of the Mediterranean. You'll see the historic medieval center, the **Greco-Roman theatre**, superlative scenery, Baroque architecture, quaint streets and romantic gardens. The afternoon is at leisure and the hotel front desk can assist with optional excursions. Today enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. **(B,D)**





Day 4: Taormina

This morning we depart for Catania and stop at the colorful open air market to sample typical street food. Continue to Mount Etna and the winery estate Barone di Villagrande. Here we'll enjoy lunch while sampling the estate's wines. **(B,L)**





Day 5: Transfer from Taormina to Agrigento

After breakfast we'll transfer by coach to Agrigento. We'll stop in Piazza Armerina to visit the famous Roman Villa adorned with splendid mosaics. Continue to Agrigento and the **Hotel Della Valle**. Tonight enjoy dinner at the hotel. **(B,D)**



Hotel Della Valle

In the midst of beautiful gardens, Hotel Della Valle offers comfortable, elegant and air-conditioned accommodations. Facilities include a bar, 2 restaurants and an outdoor swimming pool. The Hotel della Valle is within easy reach of the Valley of the Temples, but also close to the old town center, once called Akràgas.



DAY 6: Agrigento to Castellammare del Golfo

Pindaro called **Agrigento** “the most beautiful city of the Earth’s cities” and you’ll see why on a guided walking tour of the **Valley of the Temples**, one of the most important archaeological centers of the Mediterranean. Transfer to the Hotel Al Madarig. **(B)**



Hotel Al Madarig

The three-star Hotel Al Madarig (the Steps) is situated on a wide piazza which faces the sea. Strolling along the hotel street, a very panoramic walk, you will reach the Norman Arabic castle, and from there, stepping down a stone stairway, you can admire the quaint little harbor. The hotel has 38 rooms, bar, lounge room, restaurant, banquet room, free internet point and two conference rooms. The warm colors and welcoming intimate atmosphere of all the environments makes it an ideal place to spend a pleasant stay. Located in Castellammare Del Golfo's historic center, Al Madarig is set in a square overlooking the sea. It offers free Wi-Fi. All rooms at Al Madarig Hotel offer air conditioning, a private bathroom and a flat-screen TV with cable and satellite channels. The hotel is a 15-minute drive from the Segesta temple

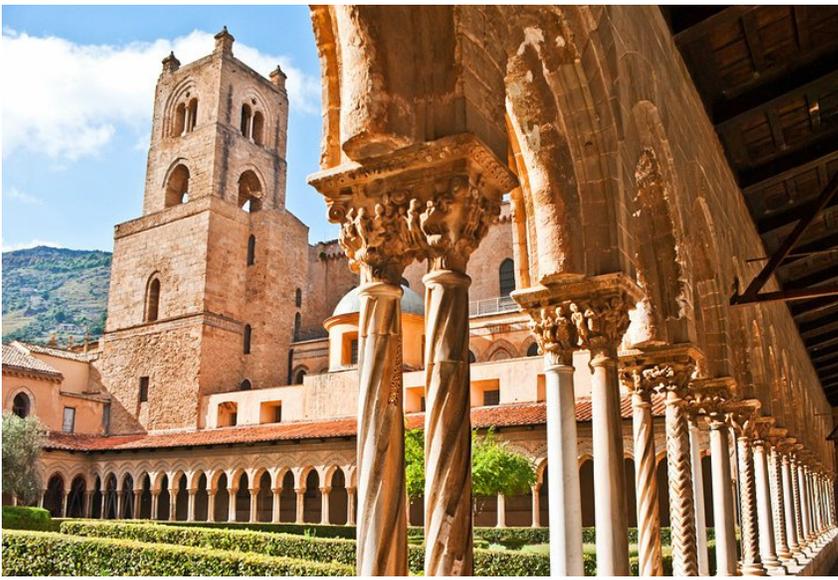




Day 7: Excursion to Palermo

After breakfast we depart for a full day's sightseeing of **Palermo**. Begin in Palermo's old town where we'll find **Quattro Canti di Citta**, an ostentatious square complete with fountains, statues and a large portion of the city's important sites. Visit the Cathedral, the Norman Palace and the Church of San Giovanni degli Eremiti (**St. John of the Hermits**) – a 12th-century Norman church with five, Arab-inspired red domes. Admission is included to **The Palatine Chapel**, the royal chapel of the Norman kings of Sicily located in the Palazzo Reale. In the afternoon we'll head to **Monreale** to visit the **Cathedral** – famed for its glorious golden mosaics. It is perhaps the finest Norman building in Sicily – built in the 12th century as part of a grand royal complex. Enjoy a farewell dinner tonight at a local restaurant. **(B,D)**





Monreale Cathedral

Day 8: Excursion to Erice

This morning enjoy a visit to **Erice**, a wonderfully preserved medieval town with breathtaking views. Later we'll travel the Via Del Sale – The Salt Road. Enjoy a seafood lunch at the Trattoria del Sale near Trapani. Formerly an ancient mill used for pumping sea water to produce salt. Later we'll visit the Salt Museum before continuing on to Segesta to see the famous Greek Temple. Return to hotel. Evening at leisure. **(B, L)**



Erice



Segesta

Day 9: Return to Boston

Transfer to Palermo airport and board your flight to Rome. Upon arrival proceed to your international flight to Boston.

When Goethe wrote that 'the key to Italy is Sicily', he could just as easily have written that Sicily is the key to ancient Greece. Visit this lush and once prosperous island, the largest in the Mediterranean Sea and marvel at the finest surviving Doric temples and theatres in the entire ancient Greek world - the setting for much of Homer's *Odyssey*. As well as being famed for its superlative cuisine, dramatically perched cliff top villages and ancient temples, the island has endless stretches of beautiful beaches.

Sicily, the gate of the Western civilization, is situated in the very heart of the Mediterranean Sea, just off the southern tip of mainland Italy, towards Africa. It's more than just an island...it's nearly a continent of its own being it one of the world's first multicultural societies. A special place full of art and archaeology, history and folklore. A spectacular nature offers sceneries unique in the world: The fire of volcanoes, the intriguing green of its fertile soils, the deep blue of the sea and wonderful colorful beaches, spacing from black to white.

In the past Sicily was Phoenician, Greek, Carthaginian, Roman, Byzantine, Moorish, Norman, Swabian, Angevin and Aragonese ... they all came from far away to make Sicily their own, creating a space and culture like no other. They all left colours and flavours, art and legends. A trip to Sicily is more than tourism: it is discovering a superb mild climate, excellent food and wine, friendly people and breathtaking landscapes.



Palermo

Once conquered by the Phoenicians, Arabs, and Spanish, Palermo today bears witness to its rich past, from Byzantine mosaics and crumbling baroque buildings, to Arabian foodie delights in La Vucciria and Ballarò markets. Pretty medieval churches, archeological gems and first-class museums are what Sicily's capital city does best -- don't miss the Palazzo dei Normanni, once home of Norman King Roger II. Although motorcycles rule the busy streets and sirens are always in the background, Palermo's bustling, chaotic personality is part of its charm. Visit Palermo's bustling street markets for a taste of local life. At La Vucciria and Ballarò, you'll find mounds of purple artichokes, piles of blood-red oranges and the odd giant octopus, while street vendors playfully shout out to passers-by. Hand-painted Sicilian ceramics make great souvenirs, but hip fashion boutiques can be found along pedestrianized Via Principe di Belmonte, north of Palermo's medieval core. For high-end brands, Via Roma and Via Maqueda in the old town are the places to go.



Monreale

This hilltop town has one of the greatest cathedrals in all of Italy and a panoramic view over the bay, Conca d'Oro. In the distance you can see the rise of Palermo. During Norman rule, the kings chose Monreale as their royal hunting ground. When William II launched the celebrated cathedral and attached a royal residence and a monastery to it, Monreale was put on the maps of the world. Since that time, pilgrims from virtually everywhere have flocked here to see this wonder.

Erice

Originally established some 3,000 years ago, Erice is an enchanting medieval city. From its panoramic mountaintop setting, two sheer cliffs drop 743m (2,438 ft.) to vistas across the plains of Trapani and down the west coast of Sicily. On a clear day, you can even see Cape Bon in Tunisia, but the Sicilian aerie of Erice is often shrouded in mist that only adds to its mystique. Erice is a lovely place to spend an afternoon wandering the medieval streets, with their baroque balconies and flowering vines, and drinking in the vistas. The southwest corner of town contains the Villa Balio gardens, originally laid out in the 19th century. Beyond the gardens, a path winds along the cliff's edge up to Erice's highest point, the Castello di Venere. Today, little more than crumbling Norman walls surround the sacred site where a temple to Venus once stood.

Agrigento

Agrigento's amazing Valley of the Temples (Valle dei Templi) is one of the most memorable sights of the ancient world. The modern part of Agrigento occupies a hill; the narrow casbahlike streets show the influence of the conquering Saracens. Heavy Allied bombing during World War II necessitated much rebuilding. Below the town stretch the long reaches of the Valley of the Temples, where you'll see some of the greatest Greek ruins in the world.



Taormina

Sicily's greatest resort, Taormina, and its fiercest attraction, Mount Etna, can be combined in one powerful trip. Such writers as Goethe and D. H. Lawrence, besotted with the glories of Taormina's panoramic views of the bays beyond and Mount Etna looming in the background, spread word of the area's charm.

Taormina was built on a cliff, Monte Tauro, overlooking the sea. To the surprise of many first-time visitors, Taormina has no beach of its own. To reach the sands, you must take a steep cable-car descent down the hill. But the medieval charm of Taormina makes a stay high on the hill well worth your time.

Taormina was just too good to remain unspoiled. Dating from the 4th century B.C., it hugs the edge of a cliff overlooking the Ionian Sea. The sea and even the railroad track lie below, connected by bus routes. Looming in the background is Mount Etna, an active volcano. Noted for its mild climate, the most beautiful town in all of Sicily seems to have no other reason to exist than for the thousands upon thousands of visitors who flock here for dining, barhopping, shopping, and enjoying the nearby beaches.

International visitors stroll back and forth along the one main street, Corso Umberto I, from April to October. After that, Taormina quiets down considerably. In spite of the hordes that descend in summer, Taormina has remained charming, with much of its medieval character intact. It's filled with intimate piazzas and palazzi dating from the 15th to the 19th centuries. You can dine in a different restaurant for every day of the week, linger at the many cafes, and browse the countless stores that sell everything from souvenir trinkets to antiques for well-heeled visitors.

PREPARING FOR YOUR TOUR

Identification **U.S. citizens require a valid passport to travel; with at least 6 months' validity beyond the date of your return to the U.S.** All non-US citizens should check with the appropriate foreign consulate for additional entry requirements. Passports are the responsibility of each traveler.

Make several copies of your passport. Carry one copy with you and leave one with someone at home. If your passport is lost or stolen, having a photocopy will make replacement easier.

Money Matters **Verify that your credit/ATM cards are valid for the duration of your tour and that they can be used internationally. We suggest that you bring a few days worth of foreign currency with you in case you are unable to get dollars changed or have access to an ATM upon arrival. Notify your bank/credit card companies that you will be traveling abroad so that your overseas purchases are not confused with fraudulent charges.**

Tipping **Tips to tour managers, drivers, guides and waitstaff are not included in the price of your trip. Tipping should always be at the travelers' discretion and should be a reflection of your satisfaction with the service provided. Following are some guidelines for your convenience.**

TOUR MANAGERS: 5E per person per day

BUS DRIVERS: 5E per person per day

LOCAL GUIDES: 2E per person

WAITSTAFF: 10E per person per week

TRANSFERS ASSISTANTS (if different from Tour Manager): 5E each way

Medications **Be sure you have a sufficient supply of prescription medications. Obtain written prescriptions for any medication you will be taking on the trip, and for eyeglasses, should replacements be necessary.**

Packing **Enclosed is a packing "cheat-sheet" to help you get started. Be sure to tape your name and address inside your luggage in case your baggage tag is lost.**

Layers are essential when sightseeing on tour as the weather can change significantly during the day and over the course of the trip. Be sure to bring comfortable walking shoes.

Accommodations While The Travel Club makes every effort to ensure special room requests, special requests are at the discretion of the hotel and cannot be guaranteed.

On tour Generally, longer programs can be filled with long travel days on a coach (rest stops included), and a lot of walking and standing (possibly on uneven surfaces), and some destinations may have altitude or other environmental concerns. Please remember that many historic areas, especially in Europe, cannot accommodate large coaches on their streets and walking tours are the only way to see the area. Whenever possible, we specify such information in your pre-departure itinerary. It is also important to be aware that many sites, especially in Europe, are not designed to accommodate wheelchairs or mobility aids.

Flights The Travel Club assumes no responsibility for applying frequent flyer miles. Please be aware that some Frequent Flyer Miles may not be applied toward certain classes of service under which tickets have been issued. However, you may contact the airline directly to attempt this on your own. Information on your tickets cannot be obtained prior to departure, so please remember to retain your boarding passes, as you may need to submit that information to the airline to redeem your miles.

Because we reserve GROUP air space, some airlines will not allow you to check on your reservation or make requests directly with the carrier prior to departure. In some cases passengers cannot make seat assignments prior to check-in at the airport. While we make every effort to ensure your requests, we cannot guarantee them. It is at the discretion of the air carrier to fulfill any special requests. In addition, many carriers do not allow seating to be assigned until check in at the airport.

Travel Insurance

Protecting yourself against unexpected medical emergencies before traveling (your own, a family member's, or a travel companion's) is a smart investment – so we strongly urge you to consider purchasing traveler's insurance. Show of the Month Travel Club recommends CSA Travel Protection for your travel insurance needs. (A brochure was forwarded to you when you reserved this trip.) PLEASE NOTE: You must contact the insurance company directly to purchase a policy and with customer service issues and questions regarding potential or existing claims. They will provide you with the most comprehensive information and assist you with processing.