

THE TRAVEL CLUB

Pre-departure Itinerary

Classic Sicily

9 DAYS: Saturday, October 21 – Sunday, October 29, 2023

“THE GORGEOUS ISLAND OF SICILY CONTINUES TO SEDUCE TRAVELLERS WITH ITS DAZZLING DIVERSITY OF LANDSCAPES AND CULTURAL TREASURES.” --Lonely Planet. Join us next Fall as we explore Sicily --from the storied streets of Palermo to the most famous of all Italian resort towns –Taormina. Explore Palermo’s Norman Palace and the Palatine Chapel’s splendid mosaics. Continue to Monreale and its magnificent Duomo. We’ll visit the picture-perfect town of Erice, travel the famous Salt Road and see the famous Greek Temple in Segesta. Explore the Valley of the Temples archaeological site in Agrigento --the most important testimony of ancient, classical culture in Sicily. Experience the open-air market in Catania for a sample of delicious street food. 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, lunch and wine tasting on the slopes of Mount Etna and a visit to the small town of Savoca – of *The Godfather* fame.

RATES

\$3,399 per person double occupancy INCLUDES round-trip airfare, fuel surcharge and fees. **Single supplement is \$355. We have a limited number of single supplements available at just \$255.** 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.

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. 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.

INCLUDES

- Round-trip regularly scheduled Alitalia Airlines flights from Boston to Palermo and Catania to Boston, via Rome (land only pricing available if you prefer to make your own air arrangements)
- Seven nights' three- and four-star accommodations
- Welcome beverage at the hotel
- Thirteen meals: seven breakfasts, two 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 Garibaldi, Palermo
DAY 5 Colleverde Park Hotel, Agrigento
DAYS 6–8 Hotel Continental, Taormina
DAY 9 Return flight to Boston

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

Day 2: Arrive Rome – connecting flight to Palermo – 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 Garibaldi in Palermo. Tonight enjoy a welcome dinner with wine at a local restaurant. **(D)**



Hotel Garibaldi

Four-star Hotel Garibaldi is right opposite Palermo's famous Politeama Theater, and offers stylish rooms with air conditioning and satellite TV with Sky channels. Free WiFi throughout is provided. All rooms have modern décor and a private bathroom with toiletries and hairdryer. Some rooms come with tea and coffee making facilities. Each morning, a varied buffet breakfast is served with fresh coffee, tea and hot chocolate. Later you can relax and enjoy a cocktail in the ultra-modern American bar. The Garibaldi Hotel is in the center of Palermo, a 20-minute walk from Palermo Cathedral.



Day 3: Full-day sightseeing Palermo & Monreale

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. In the late afternoon return to the hotel and dinner will be on our own.

(B)



The Norman Palace





Monreale

Day 4: 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



The Salt Road



Segesta

Day 5: Palermo – Agrigento

After breakfast we'll transfer by coach to Agrigento. 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. Enjoy dinner with wine and overnight accommodations at Colleverde Park Hotel. **(B,D)**



Colleverde Park Hotel

The four-star Colleverde Park Hotel overlooks the Valley of the Temples, and is a 15-minute walk from Agrigento's famous archaeological site. WiFi is free. The restaurant serves characteristic Sicilian cuisine and

offers lovely views of the Valley. Guests can relax in the hotel's charming gardens or in the lobby, decorated with 19th-century ceramics and furniture. The air-conditioned rooms have classic-style decoration. They include a TV with satellite channels, a mini-bar, and a bathroom with hairdryer and toiletries.



Day 6: Agrigento – Catania – Taormina

Depart Agrigento and travel to Catania where we'll visit the outdoor market and enjoy a taste of the local street food. In the afternoon we'll head north to the coastal resort city of Taormina, known as the Pearl of the Mediterranean. After check-in at the Hotel Continental, we'll enjoy a guided 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. Dinner this evening with wine. **(B,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 7: Taormina – Excursion to Mount Etna

After breakfast we'll meet with our guide and head to Mount Etna where we'll ascend the winding road and enjoy a photo stop at Rifugio Sapienza to see the spectacular view. In the afternoon we'll visit a winery and enjoy the local wine with lunch at the estate. **(B)**



Day 8: Taormina – Excursion to Savoca

This morning we depart for the small town of Savoca – made famous by scenes shot here for *The Godfather*. Return to Taormina for a farewell dinner with wine at a local restaurant. **(B,D)**



Day 9: Return to Boston

Transfer to Catania 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.

Proof of Citizenship is required for all trips outside the United States. U.S. citizens require a valid passport to travel; with at least 6 months' validity. All non-US citizens should check with the appropriate foreign consulate for additional entry requirements. Passports are the responsibility of each traveler.

PLEASE NOTE: *This pre-departure itinerary is designed to give you an idea of how this itinerary is structured. We reserve the right to make any changes to your final itinerary if deemed necessary, at any time prior to departure.*

PLEASE NOTE: *This is not your final itinerary. You will receive final documents (itinerary, tickets (if applicable), etc.) approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure. Although we try our best to ensure that information is accurate at the time of publication, we are not responsible for any error, omission, misprint or liability that results from the use (or misuse) of this information.*