

THE TRAVEL CLUB

Pre-Departure Itinerary

Springtime in Taormina

8 DAYS: Thursday, May 1 – Thursday, May 8, 2025

AN ANCIENT TOWN PERCHED HIGH ABOVE BLUE SEAS and decorated with blazing- red bougainvillea framing white-washed buildings, Taormina is Sicily's jewel and ranked #4 of "best spring destinations" by Condé Nast Traveller. We'll spend six nights at the Continental Hotel, located in the heart of Old Town just steps from Corso Umberto—the main pedestrian street—and get acquainted on a half-day walking tour. A highlight of our week will be a hands-on cooking class with Chef Massimo Tomarchio that begins with a guided visit to the local market! Enjoy an excursion to Catania, a port city nestled in the foothills of grumbling, old Mount Etna, for a visit to its bustling street market, followed by a winery visit and lunch at an estate. Head to Siracusa to visit the spectacular archaeological site and beautiful Ortigia Island. We'll visit Messina—sprawling up the hillside above its sickle-shaped harbor—and Savoca, a 12th-century mountain village where scenes from *The Godfather* were filmed.

Includes

- Round-trip regularly scheduled ITA Airways flights from Boston to Catania, via Rome (land only pricing available if you prefer to make your own air arrangements)
- Six nights' three-star accommodations: Hotel Continental, Taormina (or similar)
- Nine meals: six breakfasts, three dinners with wine
- One hands-on cooking lesson with lunch
- Wine tasting and lunch
- Escorted, private, round-trip airport/ hotel transfers
- Services of professional local Tour Manager

Rates

\$3,699 per person double occupancy

Includes round-trip airfare, fuel surcharge and all air taxes and fees. **Single supplement is \$400.** Triple accommodations may be available upon request. Fuel surcharge, air taxes and fees subject to change. Passport required. Per person deposit is \$300.

Hotel Continental Via Dionisio I 2A, Taormina, 98039 011 39 0942 23805

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.

Features

Taormina half-day guided walking tour. Market visit and hands-on cooking class followed by lunch. Excursion to Mount Etna with winery visit and lunch. Excursion to Siracusa archaeological park and Ortigia Island. Excursion to Messina and Savoca.

Day 1: Depart Boston

Depart Boston Logan Airport, on Alitalia's non-stop, direct service to Rome. Dinner is served with complimentary wine/beer. Relax and enjoy the inflight entertainment while crossing the Atlantic.

Day 2: Arrive Rome - connecting flight to Catania

Continental breakfast will be served before landing. In Rome, clear immigration and proceed to our connecting flight to Catania. After passport control and immigration, proceed to baggage claim and retrieve our luggage. We will then pass through customs and meet our representative who will assist with boarding the transfer vehicle to the **Hotel Continental in Taormina**. Tonight, enjoy a welcome dinner with wine. **(D)**



Day 3: Guided walking tour of Taormina

Today we'll get acquainted with Taormina - known as the Pearl of the Mediterranean. 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. **(B)**





Day 4: Siracusa & Ortigia Island

Today we'll set out on an excursion to Siracusa, the oldest city in Sicily (founded in 734 BC) and the home of Archimedes. Our tour begins with the archaeological park and we'll see the famous Roman amphitheatre, the quarries where slaves carved stone for the city and a limestone cave called the Ear of Dionysius. Later we'll visit the historic part of the city called Ortigia Island where we'll walk the labyrinth of alleys that lead to one of the most magnificent piazzas in Sicily. Here we'll visit the Duomo, an extraordinary example of Greek architecture and a painting by Caravaggio. Enjoy dinner with wine this evening at a local restaurant. **(B,D)**

Once one of ancient Greece's most important cities, today Syracuse (Siracusa in Italian) is a lively town of about 125,000 on Sicily's southeast coast. The city overflows with amazing remnants from its long history. Romans, Vandals and Normans are but a few of those who ruled here after the Greeks. In Siracusa's harbor, Ortigia Island (also called Città Vecchia or Old City) is the site of many of the main attractions, including the seventh-century cathedral and the Fountain of Arethusa.

Ortigia - Siracusa's island heart

The best way to see the island of Ortigia is just to wander. It's difficult to get lost (it measures just 1km by 500 metres), but packed with over 2,500 years of history. Architectural styles vary widely, encompassing Greek and Roman remains, Mediaeval Norman buildings and a great deal of (relatively) understated Baroque. Restaurants, trattorias and bars abound and it is especially nice to sit out on the western side in the late afternoon, warmed by the sun and with a view over the lagoon.

The Piazza del Duomo. This delightful pedestrian square is home to the wonderful Cathedral built on the site of an ancient Temple of Athena as can clearly be seen from the original Doric columns that were incorporated

into the building's main structure. Also on this square is the beautifully symmetrical Baroque Palazzo Beneventano and the church of Santa Lucia, the town's patron saint.



Ortigia Island

Day 5: Cooking lesson with Chef Massimo Tomarchio

From the bustling market of Taormina to an intimate kitchen studio, every ingredient and technique is authentically Sicilian! Today you'll meet with Chef Tomarchio and walk to the local market to choose the ingredients for your cooking class. After your market visit you'll reach the kitchen studio where Chef Massimo will share the traditional Sicilian recipes he learned from his grandmother. After your preparations, you'll enjoy lunch of your creations along with great Sicilian wine. **(B,L)**



Day 6: Catania & Mount Etna

After breakfast we'll head to Mount Etna and ascend the winding road to the Rifugio Sapienza for the incredible view. Later we'll visit a renown winery and enjoy lunch with wines from the estate. Return to the hotel and evening is at leisure. **(B,L)**



Day 7: Messina & Savoca

After breakfast we'll depart for an excursion to Messina and its sickle-shape port. The top attraction of Messina is the Bell Tower and astronomical clock. There'll be free time in Messina for lunch on our own. As we head back to Taormina we'll visit 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)**





Messina



Savoca

Day 8: Return flight to Boston

This morning transfer by motorcoach to the Naples airport for our return flight to Boston via Rome. **(B)**

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.