

SICILIAN SHOWCASE TOUR
Season: 2009
6 nights/7 days
Taormina (3 nights) Palermo (3 nights)
Collective, Small Size: maximum 6 people

IMPORTANT TO KNOW:

Driver Escort & Local Guide: We customized this tour using a Driver-Escort. You have to enter inside the monuments alone. The Driver-Escort is able to provide basic tourist information only and he is not a licensed local guide and because of it he cannot escort you inside the sites because this is not allowed by Italian Rules.

Admission fee: The price of this tour does not include the Admission Fees, which are usually around Euros 8,00 per person payable directly on the spot. If you are over 65 or under 18 years old and you have EU or Commonwealth Passport, the admission fees are free of charge for you showing your document (or copy of your document) on the spot.

Day 1 (Friday) Catania/Taormina

Welcome to the warm, beautiful and pleasant island of Sicily!

Upon arrival at Catania airport (CTA) please proceed through the Passport Control and collect your luggage inside the customs area. Outside of customs, you will find the driver waiting holding a sign with your full name. Transfer to Taormina, the resort town of Sicily.

Day 2 (Saturday) Taormina

All day long at leisure to explore the town on our own. We recommend a walking in Taormina uptown: the amazing Public Garden, the world famous narrow street of Corso Umberto famous for several shops, bar and restaurants. Independent visit to the Greek-Roman Theatre (*admission fee: charge*) a showcase from where you can view a outstanding panorama of the Etna Volcano and Giardini Naxos bay. This afternoon is at leisure or **Optional Excursion. (BB)**

AVAILABLE ON REQUEST (Private) - Optional Excursion: Godfather Excursion

A scenic drive take us to Savoca which is considered one of the most attractive places in the environ of Taormina. Bar Vitelli with a gorgeous terrace, has a collection of photographs taken when Francis Ford Coppola shot some scenes of "The Godfather II". Time at leisure for a "granita" on your own in the Bar Vitelli then we walk to the Chiesa Madre with its fine 16C portal surmounted by a beautifully carved oculus and the coat of arms of Savoca, bearing the eldeberry branch from which the name of the town is supposed to derive. Later we will continue to Forza d'Agrò an attractive medieval hamlet caps the furthestmost spurs of the Monti Peloritani with a splendid view of the coast. In 1990, Al Pacino and Sophia Coppola shot some scenes of the film "The Godfather III". Later back to Taormina

Day 3 (Sunday) Taormina

All day long at leisure to explore the town on our own or **Optional Excursions. (BB)**

AVAILABLE ON REQUEST (Collective & Private)

Optional Excursion: Etna Volcano Jeep ride

Today departure by jeep to Etna Volcano: we will experience what the Greeks called "the realm of Vulcan (god of fire)" by Jeep, viewing along the way: Mount Fontana (view of Bove Valley), the Thieves Cave (grotta dei ladroni), extinct craters of Sartorius Mounts, and the lava flow from the 2002 eruption. Indulge in a snack in a local shop to taste typical Sicilian dishes such as *olive, local bread with olive oil, chees, salame and vegetables*. Later back to Taormina **(S)**

AVAILABLE ON REQUEST (Private) - Optional Excursion: Etna Volcano & Winery

A short drive takes us to the main visitor elevation on the slopes of Mt. Etna. Those interested in experiencing the Etna craters will have the option to purchase cable car tickets on the spot (weather and volcanic conditions permitting) to experience the lava fields and incredible landscape view from Europe's highest and most active volcano on their own. Then to a winery. On arrival visit to the cellars. Later we indulge in a typical Sicilian light lunch at the farmhouse. This afternoon, back to Taormina **(L)**

Day 4 (Monday) Taormina/Piazza Armerina/Agrigento/Palermo

Today's drive across the vast countryside showcases Sicily's great variety of sceneries. We soon arrive in Piazza Armerina for an independent view to the ruins of the Roman Villa of Casale (admission fee: charge). The mosaics discovered here are celebrated among scholars of antiquity. Today we will indulge in a local lunch at country restaurant. This afternoon we will continue to Agrigento whose history dates back to 580 BC. An independent tour leads us through the Valley of the Temples (admission fee: charge), a magnificent cluster of Greek ruins overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Later we will drive to Palermo, the capital of Sicily **(BB L)**

Day 5 (Tuesday) Monreale & Palermo

After breakfast, we will visit where the Arab-Norman art and architecture reached the pinnacle of its glory with the Monreale Duomo, launched in 1174 by William II. Scenes from the Old and New Testaments are depicted in golden mosaics covering the interior. Then on to Palermo to explore the lively Capo Market, a large open street market that captures the flavor of Palermo's Saracen Arab past. Capo is a blend of general confusion and a jumble of vendors' stalls, winding toward the old gate (Porta Carini) of what used to be the city wall. We continue by seeing Piazza Pretoria and Via Maqueda, whose "four corners" converge Palermo at a quartet of baroque palaces left over from the heyday of Spanish rule dating from 1560. This afternoon is at leisure to explore the town on our own or shops. **(BB)**

Day 6 (Wednesday) Palermo/Marsala Winery/Salt Way Road/Erice/Palermo

Early departure to tour western Sicily. Our first stop is in Marsala famous for sweet wine exportation. On arrival we will visit a local winery's cellar and taste Sicilian wine and our Sicilian snack. Later, we travel between Marsala and Trapani on the Salt Way Road. We will tour the historic saltpan works, where the ancient tradition of harvesting salt from the sea is still practiced. Then to Erice uptown. The Elymians settled the medieval town of Erice, which was an important religious site associated with the goddess Venus. Wander through its ancient streets and visit some of the famous homemade pastry shops—world-famous for marzipan candies and other delicacies like almond and pistachio pastries. **(BB S)**

Day 7 (Thursday) Palermo

Time to say goodbye to Sicily as we are transferred to Palermo Airport (PMO) for our return flight. **(BB)**

MEAL LEGEND: BB Buffet Breakfast **L** Lunch **D** Dinner **S** Snack

FEATURED PROPERTIES USED FOR THIS TOUR

moderate accommodation

Taormina: Hotel Continental

Palermo: Hotel Cristal

4 star standard

Taormina: Hotel Lido Caparena

Palermo: Hotel Mercure Palermo Centro

4 star superior

Taormina: Hotel Villa Angela

Palermo: Hotel Plaza Opera

Note: Hotels may be substituted with similar category

HIGHLIGHTS:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Taormina | Worldrenowned Mediterranean resort town |
| Etna | Highest active Volcano in Europe |
| Piazza Armerina | Best Roman mosaics in Sicily |
| Agrigento | Valley of Temples |
| Palermo | Sicily's vibrant capital |
| Monreale | Gold mosaic scenes from the Old and New Testaments |
| Marsala | Worldrenowned wine producing town + winery |
| Trapani | Saltpan works |
| Erice | Breathtaking views and fortress |

TOUR DEPARTS

May 2009: 15, 22, 29

June 2009: 5, 12, 19, 26

July 2009: 10, 24, 31

August 2009: 21, 28

September 2009: 4, 11, 18, 25

October 2009: 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

November 2009: 6, 13, 20

PRICES ARE EUR PER PERSON, LAND ONLY, AND DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

| GROSS RATE: | 3 star | 4 star standard | 4 star superior |
|--------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| per person in double occupancy | 995,00 | 1.115,00 | 1.290,00 |
| per person in single occupancy | 1.160,00 | 1.300,00 | 1.600,00 |

WHAT IS INCLUDED:

- ✓ One main round trip Airport Transfers for services done between 8:00AM to 7:00PM
- ✓ Taormina: Three nights accommodation
- ✓ Palermo: Three nights accommodation
- ✓ Daily breakfast buffet/continental
- ✓ Car/Vehicle with air conditioning
- ✓ English speaking Driver Escort as per program
- ✓ One lunch in Piazza Armerina at local country restaurant, with set menù
- ✓ One visit at local winery in Marsala with wine tasting and Sicilian snack
- ✓ All sightseeing, tasting and excursions as specified in the itinerary
- ✓ Hotel & City Taxes

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED:

- ✓ Intercontinental Flight
- ✓ Gratuities to Driver Escort
- ✓ Porterage at airport
- ✓ Luggage handling at hotel
- ✓ Licensed Local Guide
- ✓ Beverages and meals not mentioned in the program
- ✓ Travel Insurance
- ✓ Airport Transfers between 8:00PM to 7:00AM require payment of the night-use supplement of Euros 10,00 per person each way
- ✓ Optional excursions
- ✓ Admission fee
- ✓ Tips