



Sicilian Carousel - 9 days

8 nights/9 days private tour of Sicily with English speaking driver escort to embrace the Island from the east to the west and back to the east. A great way to visit the most popular sites indulging your senses in the local delicious meals



Location

Agrigento



Days

9



Duration

9 Days



Category

Multi Days



Season

All Year



Tour Type

Private

TOUR OVERVIEW

Route:

Land: Catania airport (CTA – Fontanarossa International Airport), East Side

Leave: Catania airport (CTA – Fontanarossa International Airport), East Side

Day 1 – LAND: Catania airport (CTA: Fontanarossa International Airport)

Day 2 – Syracuse AM (visit: Archaeological Park and Ortigia). PM at leisure

Day 3 – Syracuse/Ragusa (visit: Ibla)/Agrigento

Day 4 – Agrigento (visit: Temples) and Sikanian Experience/Palermo

Day 5 – Palermo, Street Food and Monreale (visit: Dome)

Day 6 – Palermo/Piazza Armerina (visit: Roman Villa)/Taormina

Day 7 – Taormina/Etna Volcano Off Road Experience and Farmhouse/Taormina

Day 8 – Taormina

Day 9 – Taormina/LEAVE: Catania airport (CTA: Fontanarossa International Airport)

Recommended Licensed Local Guide:

Syracuse: already included (Half Day Walking Tour: 9AM-12PM)

Agrigento: to visit the Temples Valley

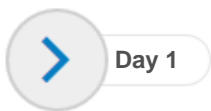
Palermo and Monreale: Full Day

Piazza Armerina: to visit the Roman Villa of Casale

Taormina: Half Day Walking Tour: 9AM-12PM or 2PM-5PM

TOUR CODE: CAROUSEL9

TOUR ITINERARY

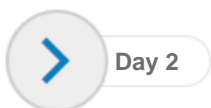


Catania airport/Syracuse

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Full Day - 40 Miles (65 Kilometers)

Private Vehicle and Italian Speaking Driver Disposal: transfer-in only

Welcome to the warm, beautiful and pleasant island of Sicily! Upon arrival at Catania Fontanarossa International Airport (CTA | Your Arrival by TBA) please proceed through Passport Control and collect your luggage inside the customs area. Then transfer to Syracuse.



Syracuse

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: -

Private Vehicle and English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: NO

Taxi Service Disposal: round trip transfers to the Archaeological Park

Syracuse, English Speaking Local Guide included for a Walking Tour, Half Day from h 9AM

Today we visit Syracuse to visit to the Archaeological Park (Admission fee: not included) highlights of which are the Greek Theatre, the Roman Amphitheatre and the Paradise Quarry. The resulting park contains some of the most extraordinary monuments that classical antiquity has left us and, given their degree of interest and importance, has few equals elsewhere in Italy. Even a quick stay in

Syracuse must include a visit to this archaeological site. Then stroll through the streets of Ortygia Island, the heart of the city center, to visit the Dome and the Aretusa Fountain.

This afternoon is at leisure.



Day 3

Syracuse/Ragusa/Agrigento

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Full Day - 145 Miles (250 Kilometers)

Private Vehicle and English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: full day from h 8.30AM

Today departure for Ragusa, to visit one of the most fascinating towns in Sicily.

Ragusa has caused many a visitor's jaw to drop as they first set eyes on the lower part of the town. Essentially Baroque, the Ragusa you will see today dates almost entirely from 1693. Indeed, it was in this year that Ragusa, along with its neighbours, Noto, Modica, Scicli and Catania, was razed to the ground by a terrible earthquake that hit most of the eastern side of Sicily. Public opinion on where to rebuild the town was divided, and so a compromise was made. The wealthier, more aristocratic citizens built a new town in a different site, now Ragusa "Superiore", while the other half of the population decided to rebuild on the original site, on a ridge at the bottom of a gorge, now Ragusa Ibla. The two towns remained separated until 1926 when they were merged to become the chief town of the province, taking the place of Modica. While the upper part has its fair share of architectural delights, it is the smaller Ragusa Ibla down below that really draws visitors. Whether you approach it from Modica to the south or from Ragusa Superiore, the sight of the jumble of houses, churches and civic palazzi piled on top of each other, clinging to the walls of the gorge, is really quite breathtaking. Although seemingly Mediaeval from a distance, once you enter the town's heart, the Baroque logic of its plan becomes more obvious.

Lunch in a local trattoria to taste the famous Ravioli, a stuffed pasta with ricotta cheese.

This afternoon we then continue to Agrigento. (L)



Day 4

Agrigento and Sikanian Experience/Palermo

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Full Day - 100 Miles (130 Kilometers)

Private Vehicle and English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: full day from h 8.30AM

Agrigento, English Speaking Local Guide NOT included

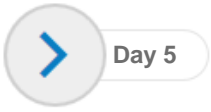
Today visit the finest of all ancient Greek sites—the complete Doric Temples (Admission fee: not included), one of Sicily's most famous historical attractions. This is one of the most outstanding examples of Greater Greece art and architecture, and is one of the main attractions of Sicily as well as a national monument of Italy. The area was included in the UNESCO Heritage Site list in 1997. Founded as a Greek colony in the 6th century B.C., Agrigento became one of the leading cities in the Mediterranean world. Its supremacy and pride are demonstrated by the remains of the magnificent Doric temples that dominate the ancient town, much of which still lies intact under today's fields and orchards. This splendid archaeological park consists of eight temples (and various other remains) built between about 510 BC and 430 BC: the Temple of Hera, the Temple of Concordia, the Temple of Heracles, the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the Temple of Castor and Pollux, the Temple of Hephaestus, the Temple of Demeter, and the Temple of Asclepius (the God of Medicine). Apart from this latter, which is to be found on the banks of the Akragas river, all are situated in the same area on rocky crests south of modern day Agrigento (not really in a Valley at all!).

Later we drive to the unique country town off the beaten track. First time visitors can't help but be dazzled and awed when, from the provincial road that meanders from Agrigento inland along curves, twists and bends between mountains and hills, they are greeted by a uniquely spectacular view. On a lonely hill, in the center of the Platani river valley, surrounded by wild and harsh vegetation, a handful of houses lie on the sheer slope of the hill—this is the small town of Sant'Angelo. Upon arrival meet the bakery owner. She will show us Pizza and Bread preparation. Simple, home-cooked snack in picnic style to taste Sicilian Pizza and Pane Cunsatu (a typical homemade bread with olive oil and pecorino cheese).

Lunch in picnic style to enjoy local life and real gastronomy for your unforgettable Sicilian Local Food

experience.

This afternoon we then continue onto Palermo, the Capital of Sicily. (L)



Palermo, Street Food and Monreale

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Full Day - 40 Miles (60 Kilometers)

English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: full day from h 8.30AM

Monreale, English Speaking Local Guide NOT included

Palermo, English Speaking Local Guide NOT included

Palermo Walking Tour Street Food Experience from h 10.30AM with English Speaking Staff

Our tour starts with a short drive to Monreale, to see where Arab-Norman art and architecture reached its pinnacle in the Duomo (Admission fee: not included), launched in 1174 by William II. It represents scenes from the Old and New Testaments all in golden mosaics. The splendid mosaics in the interior of Monreale Cathedral are its principal artistic attraction. Their subtle beauty creates an atmosphere of solemn tranquility and perhaps even awe. The mosaics cover practically all the surfaces of the cathedral's walls, except for the ground level, up to a height of two meters, where the walls are finished in white marble bordered with polychrome inlay decoration. All of the cathedral's mosaic figures (many are icons) are placed upon a background of gold mosaic "tesserae" (tiles). The interior of the church is about 100 meters long by 40 meters wide. There are a total of 130 individual mosaic scenes depicting biblical and other religious events. The Old Testament is depicted on the walls of the central nave, starting from the Creation and ending with Jacob's Fight with the Angel.

We then return to Palermo to start Street Food Tour. It's important to know that Palermo is in fifth place according to the "top ten cities for street food" ranking published by several Travel News Paper. The uniqueness of street food from Palermo lies not only in its variety and in his goodness, but also in the ability that every dish has to tell a historical chapter of the Sicilian capital. So, if you come to Palermo you can't miss the chance to enjoy its extraordinary cuisine exploring 2,000 years of history: from the landing of Phoenicians to the one of Americans! With us you'll have the chance to taste the best street food, where only locals go to fill their big bellies! We start our street food walking tour through the old squares and markets of the city center. The itinerary includes several stops at bakeries, street vendors and old inns to taste the delicious street food of Palermo and a selection of Sicilian sweet wines. Along the walking tour you will enter places hung out only by real Sicilians. Each tasting will be made official by your Tour Leader who will share with you meal information and legends. Our Street Palermo Tour isn't just food! It also includes stops at the main historical squares and several hidden spots of the city center to offer participants a comprehensive overview of the artistic and historical evolution of the city.

The Palermo Street Food ends in the early afternoon at the Palermo Cathedral (Tips: not included) erected in 1185 by Walter Ophamil (or Walter of the Mill), the Anglo-Norman archbishop of Palermo and King William II's minister, on the area of an earlier Byzantine basilica. By all accounts this earlier church was founded by St. Gregory and was later turned into a mosque by the Saracens after their conquest of the city in the 9th century. Ophamil is buried in a sarcophagus in the church's crypt. The medieval edifice had a basilica plan with three apses, of which only some minor architectural elements survive today. We then continue onto the Four Corners which is the junction in Palermo. Effectively, it is the centre point of the four areas of the old town centre. You will almost inevitably pass through it and it is worth stopping for five minutes to have a look at its sculptures which were commissioned by the Spanish Viceroy in 1611. The sculptures on each of the four corners depict a variety of themes, including the four seasons, four Spanish kings and the four patron saints of the old town areas. Going south-east down Via Maqueda you will come across Piazza Pretoria which is home not only to a splendid fountain but several other impressive buildings including, on the right, the City Hall. The fountain, known for generations as the "Fountain of Shame", has an interesting history. It was originally built in 1555 by the Florentine sculpture Francesco Camiliani for a Tuscan villa owned by the Viceroy Pedro de Toledo. His son, on inheriting the

villa in 1574, thought it a little too risky for his tastes and sold it to the City of Palermo who erected it where it now stands. The large central fountain is the focal point for sixteen nude statues of nymphs, humans, mermaids and satyrs. If you imagine this being erected during the Inquisition, it is quite easy to imagine why it received its epithet, the "Fountain of Shame". (L)



Day 6

Palermo/Piazza Armerina/Taormina

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Full Day - 170 Miles (260 Kilometers)

Private Vehicle and English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: full day from h 8.30AM

Piazza Armerina, English Speaking Local Guide NOT included

Today departure for Piazza Armerina situated deep in the Sicilian hinterland, at 721 metres above sea level, one of Sicily's most frequented tourist spots. However, it is not the town that most people come to see, but the famous Villa Romana del Casale (Admission fee: not included). Built in the middle of the 4th Century AD as a hunting lodge by a Roman patrician (it is not known for sure who the owner was) the Villa is home to some of the best preserved and extensive examples of Roman mosaics spread over around 3500mt. The villa is one of the most luxurious of its kind. It is especially noteworthy for the richness and quality of the mosaics which decorate almost every room; they are the finest mosaics in situ anywhere in the Roman world. These extraordinarily vivid mosaics, probably produced by North African artisans, deal with numerous subjects, ranging from Homeric escapades and mythological scenes to portrayals of daily life, including the famous tableau of girls exercising in their "bikinis".

This afternoon we then continue to Taormina, the world famous resort town of Sicily.



Day 7

Taormina/Etna Volcano Off Road Experience and Farmhouse/Taormina

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Full Day - 40 Miles (70 Kilometers)

Season: this excursion is doable all year around but it will be operated depending of weather and Volcanic condition).

Dress Code (June-October): use sturdy shoes, wind jacket and do not forget sun screen

Private Jeep (WD4X4, Land Rover) and English Speaking Driver Disposal: full day from h 8.30AM

Today meet the off-road's driver and transfer to Etna Volcano. Our first stop is the the 2002 lava flow reachable by jeep through a winding dirt road surrounded by chestnut and oak forests. The 2002 eruption lasted from October 27th to January 29th 2003 and it is considered one of the most explosive eruptions of the past one hundred years. Continuing our excursion we will reach the Ragabo pine forest where hidden among pines and brooms, we will discover the cave of Corruccio (1350 meters above sea level) a cave formed by flowing lava. Later, driving up along the Mareneve road we will reach Piano Provenzana (1800 meters above sea level), a ski resort, theater of the great eruption of 2002. After enjoying an excellent espresso, we will take a short walk to visit the ruins of the hotel Le Betulle destroyed by a molten lava flow.

Summit Craters

From Piano Provenzana possibility to join a collective tour (weather and volcanic conditions permitting) at cost of approx 70 Eur per person.

This tour begins at "Piano Provenzana" and follows a mountain trail at an altitude of 2900 meters. Traveling by large, off road vehicle, we will reach a high mountain slope framed by magnificent views of lava and volcanic sand along the rift created in the 2002 eruption. At the foot of the mountain one can admire the beautiful Peloritani, Nebrodi and Madonie mountain ranges; all surrounded by the picturesque Tyrrhenian and Ionian coast, from Siracusa to Calabria, from Taormina to the Aeolian islands. Here, one can take in the most impressive views in the world ... the multiple fumaroles and seemingly lunar landscapes created by multiple eruptions between 1923 and 2002. At an altitude of 2900

meters the North-East crater (where the volcano observatory is located), dominates the area. In clear weather, one can see both the "Lion" and the "Bove" valleys from this point.

Later we travel through one of the most beautiful and crossing large expanses of vineyards (Etna D.O.C.), we will stop at a local farmhouse. This is the ideal place to enjoy relaxing moments surrounded by nature while sampling local cuisine and excellent wines. In fact the wines are complemented by uniquely local delicacies.

Light lunch in a local rustic restaurant to taste local meals and wine.

This afternoon we then return to Taormina (L)



Day 8

Taormina

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: -

Private Vehicle and English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: NO

Taormina, English Speaking Local Guide NOT included

Today is at leisure: enjoy a drink at the tables of Caffè Wunderbar (or similar) in Piazza IX Aprile may set you back a few euros, but you'll be basking where Tennessee Williams and Elizabeth Taylor basked before you. As well as the famed Greek-Roman Theatre (Admission fee: not included), there are several minor sites to be discovered around Taormina. The attractive principal thoroughfare, Corso Umberto is pedestrian and ideal for strolling and window-shopping. Picturesque lanes above and below the Corso are interesting to explore, while if you want to stretch your legs further there are attractive walks up into the hills, or down to the sea. Given its compact size, Taormina has a huge range of bars, cafes and restaurants where you can while away pleasant hours while admiring the views.



Day 9

Taormina/Catania Airport

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: 50 Minutes - 45 Miles (70 Kilometers)

Private Vehicle and Italian Speaking Driver Disposal: transfer out only

Today departure for Fontanarossa Catania airport (CTA | Your Departure by TBA)

TOUR MAP



WHAT IS INCLUDED?

- ✓ Airport transfers
- ✓ All sightseeing, tasting and excursions as specified in the itinerary
- ✓ Cooking demonstration
- ✓ English speaking Driver
- ✓ Private Jeep Ride Excursion
- ✓ Tasting of local products
- ✓ Tastings of street food
- ✓ VAT
- ✓ Vehicle with air conditioning

NOT INCLUDED

- ✗ Admission fees
- ✗ Beverage and meal not specified
- ✗ City taxes
- ✗ Gratuities and tips
- ✗ Hotel accommodation
- ✗ Intercontinental/Local Flights
- ✗ Licensed Tourist Guide if not specified
- ✗ Travel Insurance