



Amazing East - 8 days

7 nights/8 days private tour of Sicily with English speaking driver escort exploring the Amazing east side of Sicily between the Etna volcano, delicious local meals, chocolate, fishing village, baroque town off the beaten track and Taormina



Location

Agrigento



Days

8



Duration

8 Days



Category

Multi Days



Season

All Year



Tour Type

Private

TOUR OVERVIEW

Amazing East Tour

8 days/7 nights | Syracuse (3 night) Agrigento (1 night) Taormina (3 night)

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)/Syracuse

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

Day 3 – Syracuse/Scicli (visit: Baroque) and Marzamemi (visit: Fishing Village)/Syracuse

Day 4 – Syracuse/Modica (visit: Chocolate Shop) and Ragusa (visit: Ibla)/Agrigento

Day 5 – Agrigento (visit: Temples) and Piazza Armerina (visit: Roman Villa)/Taormina

Day 6 – Taormina/Etna Volcano Off Road Experience and Farmhouse/Taormina

Day 7 – Taormina

Day 8 – Taormina/LEAVE: Catania airport (CTA: Fontanarossa International Airport)

Recommended Licensed Local Guide:

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

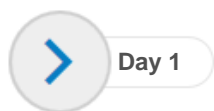
Agrigento: to visit the Temples Valley

Piazza Armerina: to visit the Roman Villa of Casale

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

TOUR CODE: AMAZ8

TOUR ITINERARY

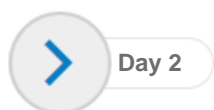


Catania airport/Syracuse

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/Scicli and Marzamemi/Syracuse

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Full Day - 120 Miles (180 Kilometers)

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

Off the beaten track Scicli is well worth a visit if you're ever in south-eastern Sicily. The town shares much of its history with the other UNESCO Heritage Site towns of the Val di Noto, most specifically the fateful earthquake of 1693, during which over 3,000 of the town's population died. Scicli, like the towns in the area, was totally rebuilt in pure Sicilian Baroque style. Today, it is a joy to wander round. The many aristocratic palazzi, such as Palazzo Beneventano, are also fun to see, brimming over with characterful gargoyles, elegant swirls and decorative fancies. A stroll along Via Francesco Mormina Penna is also strongly recommended as it provides a perfect example of a late Baroque street, harmonious in its wholeness and equal to anything found in the neighboring towns of greater fame.

This afternoon we drive for Marzamemi. Just a few kilometres up the coast from Italy's southernmost point, in the deep south-east of Sicily, is one of Sicily's prettiest seaside villages. It was the Arabs of the 10th century who put Marzamemi on the map. They not only gave the village its poetic name, Mars? al-hamam (translating as something like Turtle Dove Bay) but also built the original tonnara (tuna processing plant), which was to become one of the most important on the island. Although the tonnara itself is no longer in function, Marzamemi continues its artisanal fishing and processing activities, producing all manner of delicacies, including canned tuna, dried tuna roe (bottarga), smoked swordfish, marinated anchovies, seafood pasta condiments, tuna salamis and much more besides! The old centre of the village, most of which dates back to the arrival of the Principe di Villadorata in the mid-18th century, is situated on a little promontory and organised around the extremely picturesque Piazza Regina Margherita. On the south side is the little fishing harbour with its bobbing fleet of colourful wooden boats, on the others a series of charming buildings, including the Church of San Francesco di Paola, the tonnara, the prince's aristocratic palazzo and a row of fishermen's houses, whose sky blue doors and potted red geraniums lend a chromatic vivacity to the whole picture. Narrow streets lead off the main square, offering glimpses of the turquoise sea to the east and north.

We then continue to Syracuse.



Day 4

Syracuse/Modica and 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 Modica. Like the other towns in the Val di Noto, was badly damaged in the 1693 earthquake and largely rebuilt in Sicilian Baroque style. It is divided into two parts, "higher" Modica and "lower" Modica, which are connected by numerous flights of steps. Palazzi and houses rise from the bottom of the gorge seemingly stacked one on top of the other. Magnificent churches, with their inspiring domes, bell towers and intricate facades, punctuate the red-tiled roofs and one is struck by the uniform beauty of the whole. Modica has a long and varied history, complete with the usual toing and froing of successions of invaders. It came to real prominence in 1296, when Frederick II of Aragon (not to be confused with Frederick II "Stupor Mundi") formed the "County of Modica", a kind of "state within a state" that was initially governed by Manfredi I Chiaramonte. Modica is custodian of a 400 year tradition of Sicilian chocolate-making. Being part of the Spanish kingdom for so many years meant that Sicily was often one of the first recipients of the new foodstuffs being brought back from South America. Cacao was one of these and today Modica still specialises in making granulous chocolate, often flavoured with chilli pepper, cinnamon or vanilla, that is based on Aztec methods and recipes. Chocolate shops abound and, for the real chocoholic, it is sometimes possible to watch the "chocolatiers" at work. Tasting of Modica chocolate is a must.

Later onto 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.

This afternoon we then continue to Agrigento.



Day 5

Agrigento and 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

Agrigento, English Speaking Local Guide NOT included

Piazza Armerina, English Speaking Local Guide NOT included

Today we 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 onto 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 6

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 from June to October. From November to May we will provide a different route which does not involve the summit of the volcano and arrives only up to 1.500 mt.

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 we will join a collective tour (weather and volcanic conditions permitting). 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 Wine Roads of Sicily 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 farmhouse with wine.

This afternoon we then return to Taormina (L)



Day 7

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.

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
- ✓ Basic English speaking jeep driver
- ✓ English speaking Driver
- ✓ Italian speaking Driver
- ✓ Licensed Local Guide as per program
- ✓ Tasting of Sicilian wines accompanied by local products
- ✓ VAT
- ✓ Vehicle with air conditioning

NOT INCLUDED

- ✗ Admission fees
- ✗ Beverage and meal not specified
- ✗ City taxes
- ✗ Fee for luggage handling fee at hotel
- ✗ Gratuities and tips
- ✗ Hotel accommodation
- ✗ Intercontinental/Local Flights
- ✗ Licensed Tourist Guide if not specified
- ✗ Porterage at airport
- ✗ Travel Insurance