



Wine and Gastronomy - 9 days

8 nights/9 days private Sicily Wine and Gastronomy Tour focus on the west side of the Island. Provided with English speaking driver escort, land only. Indulge your senses in the delicious local olive oil, meals, wine and gastronomy.



Location

Agrigento



Days

9



Duration

9 Days



Category

Multi Days



Season

All Year



Tour Type

Private

TOUR OVERVIEW

Route:

Land: Palermo airport (PMO – Falcone Borsellino International Airport), West Side

Leave: Palermo airport (PMO – Falcone Borsellino International Airport), West Side

West-End Gourmet Tour | Wine, Art and Gastronomy - Private

9 days/8 nights | Marsala (3 night) Menfi (1 night) Agrigento (1 night) Palermo (3 night)

Day 1 – LAND: Palermo airport (PMO: Falcone Borsellino International Airport)/Marsala

Day 2 – Marsala/Salt Way Road, Erice, Marzipan and San Vito lo Capo/Marsala

Day 3 – Marsala: salt pans and winery

Day 4 – Marsala/Castelvetrano: Valle del Belice Olive Oil/Menfi

Day 5 – Menfi/Winery and Agrigento

Day 6 – Agrigento/Sikanian Food: off the beaten track/Palermo

Day 7 – Palermo and Monreale

Day 8 – Palermo: Open Air Market, Street Food and Cooking Class

Day 9 – LEAVE: Palermo airport (PMO: Falcone Borsellino International Airport)

Recommended Licensed Local Guide:

-Palermo and Monreale: already included

-Agrigento: to visit the Temples Valley

TOUR CODE: WINE9

TOUR ITINERARY



Day 1

Palermo airport (PMO)/Marsala

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: 1 hour 20 Minutes - 70 Miles (105 Kilometers)

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

Welcome to the warm, beautiful and pleasant island of Sicily! Upon arrival at Palermo Falcone-Borsellino Airport (PMO | Your Arrival by TBA) please proceed through Passport Control and collect your luggage inside the customs area. Then transfer in Marsala



Day 2

Marsala/Salt Way Road, Erice, Marzipan and San Vito lo Capo/Marsala

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Full Day - 100 Miles (170 Kilometers)

Private Vehicle and English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: full day from h 9AM

Today we drive between Marsala and Trapani on the Via-del-Sale (Salt Way Road). On the way, it is possible to see numerous dazzlingly white mountains shimmering in the sun. These are not snow-capped mountains but hills of salt, one of the Sicilian economy's historical resources that was already very precious in the days of the Phoenicians, who were the first to bring some form of technology to its production. This is the best way to travel to join Erice uptown, 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. Towering over the west of Sicily at 751m above sea level and often covered in its own personal cloud, Erice is a wonderfully preserved Mediaeval town offering the most breathtaking views and a palpable sense of history. Originally an Elymian city (the Elymians were around before the Greeks ever set foot in Sicily) Erice, or Eryx as it was first called, was a town of no little importance and renown and is said to have attracted the likes Hercules and Aeneas. Like so many Sicilian towns, it passed from one invader to another as all the usual suspects came and went, leaving their architectural calling cards and their cultural footprints. The name changed from Eryx, to Erice to Gebel Hamed and Monte San Giuliano but its essential character remained, obstinately repelling any attempt to change its real identity. Amongst the most visited sites are the two castles, Pepoli Castle and Venus Castle. The former was built by the Arabs while the latter was a Norman construction with imposing towers that derived its name from

the fact that it was built on the site of the ancient Temple of Venus, allegedly founded by Aeneas.

Lunch in a local trattoria to taste the famous Fish Soup Cous Cous.

This afternoon we then continue onto the small village of San Vito lo Capo a nice fishing village resort at the tip of a cape which marks the north-western corner of Sicily. A walk in a city centre overlooking the pink-sand and clean water is a must. Later return to Marsala. (L)



Day 3

Marsala: Nature Reserve, Saltpans and Winery

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

Important: Marsala winery is closed on Sunday, Bank Holidays and Summer Week (middle of August)

Private Vehicle and English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: full day from h 10AM

The Nature Reserve of the Stagnone and the island of Mozia is a place of extraordinary beauty, where alongside the exceptional natural landscapes you can appreciate the typical windmills of Trapani coast, original examples of still fully functional industrial archeology. Saline della Laguna are located inside the Reserve. In front of the saltpans, just after the small islands of the lagoon, there is the archipelago of Egadi Islands: Favignana, Levanzo and Marettimo. To the north you can see the "peninsula" where is located the city of Trapani, whose original name, Drepanum, means scythe. To the south there is the city of Marsala extended around Boeo Cape. The sea salt, in the tradition of this part of Sicily, is obtained by the evaporation of the sea water, through a simple but functional method of "handmade fractional distillation", that allows to highlight the positive qualities and at the same time eliminate unwanted compounds such as calcium sulphate or gypsum.

Light lunch will be served at the area around the saltpans.

Later this afternoon a short drive takes us onto the Cantine Florio Winery (Cantine Florio Winery: subject to availability) to taste the Marsala wines. Marsala is a wine, dry or sweet. While the city's natives sometimes drink "vintage" Marsala, the wine produced for export is universally fortified similar to Port, Madeira and Sherry. Originally, this addition of alcohol was to ensure that it would last on long ocean voyages, but now it is made that way because of its popularity in foreign markets. (L)



Day 4

Marsala/Castelvetrano: Nocellara del Belice Olive Oil/Menfi

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

Private Vehicle and English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: full day from h 9AM

Today we travel to Castelvetrano, a nice village in the southwestern of the island famous for the olive oil production. The town is well-known for the Nocellara del Belice olives. It is a dual-purpose olive, grown both for oil and for the table. It is used to make "Valle del Belice" extra-virgin olive oil, which is pressed from a minimum of 70% Nocellara del Belice olives. As a table olive it may be treated by various methods, one of which is named for the comune of Castelvetrano in the Valle del Belice; these may be marketed as Castelvetrano olives in the United States and elsewhere, and are large, green olives with a mild, buttery flavor. Unusually, the Nocellara del Belice olive has two DOP protections: both Valle del Belice DOP olive oil and Nocellara del Belice DOP table olives have protected status in the European Union.

Light lunch in an olive oil farmhouse-factory with olive oil tastings.

This afternoon we then continue onto Menfi, famous for wine productions. (L)



Day 5

Menfi/Sambuca di Sicilia Winery and Agrigento

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Full Day - 90 Miles (140 Kilometers)

Private Vehicle and English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: full day from h 9AM

Agrigento, English Speaking Local Guide NOT included

Today we travel on the shores of Lake Arancio, to visit Ulmo by Planeta Winery (Planeta Winery: subject to availability). An ancient 16th-century baglio, or stone farmhouse, overlooks the estate which is also home to the Iter Vitis open-air museum dedicated to the history of the Sicilian viticulture. The La Segreta nature trail offers three possible walks through the vineyards, allowing visitors to discover wild spots and unique landscapes. Planeta Winery is one of the premier wine estates of Sicily, and a veritable fine wine empire. The company has vineyards and estates all over the island of Sicily including- the Ulmo contrada and vineyards in Sambuca di Sicilia.

Snack and wine tastings at the Planeta Winery.

Later we then continue to Agrigento.

This afternoon 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!). (S)



Day 6

Agrigento/Sikanian Local Food Experience: off the beaten track/Palermo

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Full Day - 100 Miles (160 Kilometers)

Private Vehicle and English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: full day from h 9AM

Today 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)



Day 7

Palermo and Monreale

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

English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: NO

Private Vehicle and Italian Speaking Driver Disposal: half day from h 8.30AM

Palermo and Monreale, English Speaking Local Guide included, half day from h 8.30AM

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.

Later we return to Palermo and 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 risqu? 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". Behind the City Hall, there is another square, Piazza Bellini where you can see two of Palermo's most interesting churches: the Church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio (Admission fee: not included) --more commonly known as La Martorana -- and the Church of San Cataldo, instantly recognizable thanks to its trio of red domes. La Martorana was commissioned in 1143 by George of Antioch, a famous Admiral (a word of Arabic origin) of the fleet of King Roger II. Initially the church was dedicated to the celebration of Greek Orthodox rites but this changed in the 13th century when it became part of the Catholic Church. Several parts of the structure were unfortunately changed during the 17th century and many of the original mosaics were discarded to make way for Baroque frescoes. However, the surviving mosaics are amongst the most impressive ever to have been created in Sicily. Indeed, the craftsmen who were brought from Byzantium by King Roger II to work on the Normal Palace and the Duomo at Cefalu', also contributed their art to this church. The wonderful bell tower outside is the apogee of Norman-Arab architecture.

This afternoon is at leisure.



Day 8

Palermo: Open Air Market, Street Food and Cooking Class

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

House-Chef, English Speaking Disposal: full day from h 8.30AM

Taxi Service Disposal: if necessary

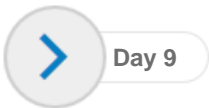
English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: NO

Private Vehicle and Italian Speaking Driver Disposal: NO

Today we start a lovely 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. Here at the open air market we will also purchase all the ingredients necessary for the cooking class.

Then we move in a private house. Arriving at the house, you are welcomed to the kitchen with a refreshing glass of Sicilian white wine while you unpack your market purchases and discuss the menu that lay ahead of you. Get ready to cook two main courses: Pasta and Caponata - the most famous of Sicilian side dishes -and a dessert.

At the end of the cooking course, enjoy your own made lunch, accompanied by a glass of wine, to choose from 6 different In-Purezza Wines, especially selected for their importance to Sicilian cuisine and to perfectly match your delicious food: Nero d' Avola, Nerello Mascalese, Frappato, Grecanico, Insolia, Grillo or Catarratto. In-Purezza means that they are not blended wines. (L)



Palermo/airport

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: 39 Minutes - 20 Miles (31 Kilometers)

Private Vehicle and Italian Speaking Driver Disposal: transfer out only

Today departure for Falcone-Borsellino International Airport (PMO | Your Departure by TBA)

TOUR MAP



WHAT IS INCLUDED?

- ✓ Airport transfers
- ✓ All sightseeing, tasting and excursions as specified in the itinerary
- ✓ Cooking class
- ✓ Cooking demonstration
- ✓ English speaking chef
- ✓ Licensed Local Guide as per program
- ✓ Olive oil and local product tasting
- ✓ one light lunch at olive oil factory
- ✓ Sicilian wine expert guide
- ✓ Tastings of street food and local wines
- ✓ Vehicle with air conditioning
- ✓ Wine Tastings

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
- ✗ Porterage at airport
- ✗ Travel Insurance