



Sicilian Showcase Tour - 8 days

7 nights/8 days private tour, land only with English speaking driver escort exploring a showcase of Sicily and enjoy local life, street food and delicious meals in combo with historical and archaeological sites.



Location

Agrigento



Days

8



Duration

8 Days



Category

Multi Days



Season

All Year



Tour Type

Private

TOUR OVERVIEW

Route:

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

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

Sicilian Showcase Tour | Palermo (3 night) Agrigento (1 night) Taormina (3 night)

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

Day 2 – Palermo, Street Food

Day 3 – Palermo/Cefalù (visit: Lavatory and Cathedral) and Monreale (visit: Dome)/Palermo

Day 4 – Palermo/Agrigento (visit: Valley of the Temples)

Day 5 – Agrigento/Piazza Armerina (visit: Roman Villa) and Caltagirone (visit: pottery shop)/Taormina

Day 6 – Taormina/Savoca Fresh Lemon Granita/Taormina

Day 7 – Taormina at leisure

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

Recommended Licensed Local Guide:

- Palermo: already included (Half Day Walking Tour: 2PM-5PM)
- Monreale: to visit the Dome
- 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: SHOW8

TOUR ITINERARY



Day 1

Palermo airport (PMO)/town

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



Day 2

Palermo, Street Food

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

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

English Speaking Driver Escort Disposal: NO

Palermo, English Speaking Local Guide included for half day walking tour from 2PM

Today is dedicated to Palermo 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 Streat 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 Camilliani for a Tuscan villa owned by the Viceroy Pedro de Toledo. His son, on inheriting the villa in 1574, thought it a little too risqué 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 3

Palermo/Cefalù and Monreale/Palermo

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Full Day - 155 Miles (250 Kilometers)

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

Monreale, English Speaking Local Guide NOT included

Just one hour's drive east of Palermo, sitting serenely between its natural bay and the towering rocky granite mass of La Rocca, is Cefalù. For a small town, Cefalù offers a great deal, including sandy beaches, winding Mediaeval streets flanked with all manner of shops, excellent restaurants serving the freshest of fish and last but probably first, its unique Norman Cathedral. While Cefalù's origins go back to at least Greek times (the name derives from the ancient Greek word for "Cape"), the town we now know and love was built at the behest of the Norman King, Roger II. Construction of the Cathedral began in 1131 and is an exquisite example of what has been termed "Sicilian Romanesque". Thanks to the splendid mosaic of Christ Pantocrator above the altar, it is twinned with the Palatine Chapel in Palermo and the Duomo in Monreale. Seeing all three on a trip to Sicily is strongly recommended. Also of interest is the Mediaeval wash house - lavatoio - which is fed by a natural spring and the Osterio Magno which, according to tradition was King Roger's very own residence. It now houses art exhibitions.

This afternoon we then continue onto 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 story of how this splendid cathedral came into being starts when the Arabs took control of Palermo in 831. They transformed the cathedral into a mosque and banished the Bishop of Palermo from town. Not wishing to venture too far from his beloved cathedral, the Bishop settled in a small village in the hills overlooking Palermo, the site of modern-day Monreale. There, he built a modest church to keep the flame of local Christian worship alive. Some 240 year later, in 1072, the Normans drove the Arabs from Sicily, establishing Palermo as their capital and re-consecrating the Cathedral. In 1174, in an act of piety, thanksgiving and commemoration of the exiled Bishop, King William II ordered the construction of a new church in Monreale, dedicated to the Virgin Mary (one of the mosaics depicts King William II presenting the church to the Madonna). On its completion in 1182, Pope Lucius III elevated the splendid church to the status of metropolitan Cathedral. Enlightened, tolerant and appreciative of many aspects of North African and middle-eastern culture and art, William II employed the very best Arabic and Byzantine (as well as Norman) craftsmen to work on the cathedral. The result is a fabulous and fascinating fusion of architectural styles, artistic traditions and religious symbolism. In 2015, Arab-Norman Palermo and the cathedrals of Monreale and Cefalù were

granted status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We then return to Palermo.



Day 4

Palermo/Agrigento

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Half Day - 85 Miles (130 Kilometers)

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

Agrigento, English Speaking Local Guide NOT included

Today departure for Agrigento. to 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!).

This afternoon is at leisure.



Day 5

Agrigento/Piazza Armerina and Caltagirone/Taormina

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Full Day - 160 Miles (260 Kilometers)

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

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 Caltagirone famous all over the world for its production of ceramics, first started during the Greek domination, this lovely destination is nowadays appreciated for its remarkable churches and refined palaces and Seventeenth-Century villas: the value of its artistic and monumental heritage has been awarded by UNESCO that listed Caltagirone among the World Heritage Sites back in 2002. Tourism and ceramics are the most important resources of this pretty town where every corner tells an interesting and ancient story: the name itself comes from an Arabic term that meant "Castle of pottery jars". Plenty of extraordinary works of art are still preserved in the city's Museum of Pottery, where some of the terra-cotta objects date back to the period of Magna Grecia. The outstanding quality and creativity of Caltagirone's ceramics is best admired in the most famous landmark of the town: the monumental Santa Maria del Monte staircase, whose 142 steps are all decorated with hand-painted ceramic tiles, using the typical colors, shapes and patterns of the most traditional pottery production and

art.

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



Day 6

Taormina/Savoca and Leomon Ice Granita/Taormina

Approximately Travel Time and Unit: Half Day - 37 Miles (70 Kilometers)

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

Today a short drive takes us to the small village of Savoca. one of those just-being-discovered destinations which you should visit as soon as possible. A quiet and crumbling hill village perched high above the sea, this is a really atmospheric taste of authentic Sicily. A world away from the touristy bustle of over-developed Taormina just down the coast, Savoca offers a chance to breathe deeply and see what an unspoiled Sicilian hill village can be. As you tour the panoramic lanes, the view encompasses sea, mountains, steep green valleys, cultivated terraces, sheep, distant hill towns, ruins and far-off Etna, Sicily's giant. Savoca has plenty of charms of its own, but for occupants of the occasional tourist buses which make their way here, the main attraction is the village's connection with Francis Ford Coppola's film The Godfather. Scenes for the movie were shot at Bar Vitelli, on the village's little square, and Coppola fans - along with all Savoca's other visitors - will inevitably spend some time relaxing outside this pleasant little bar. Bar Vitelli has outdoor tables under a leafy trellis, stray cats that beg for food and a simple interior with a room lined with stills from The Godfather featuring the village. The bar serves drinks including wine and Sicilian favourite Almond Milk along with the refreshing Lemon Ice Granita (Lemon Ice Granita: included) which is very tasty in this part of the island. Later we drive back to Taormina.

This afternoon is at leisure.



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.



Day 8

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
- ✓ English speaking Driver
- ✓ Italian speaking Driver
- ✓ Licensed Local Guide as per program
- ✓ Tastings of street food
- ✓ VAT
- ✓ 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
- ✗ Licensed Tourist Guide if not specified
- ✗ Porterage at airport
- ✗ Travel Insurance