

2014

# Sicily: A Cultural Journey



*The elaborate artistry and greenery typical of Sicilian cities*

## DAY 1: FLIGHT TO SICILY

Fly through the night to Italy aboard an internationally recognized airline.

## DAY 2: ARRIVAL IN PALERMO

Touch down in Palermo, Sicily's capital and chief port. After you clear customs, a Go Ahead representative greets you at the airport and escorts you to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to relax or begin exploring Palermo. Later this evening, meet your fellow travelers at your welcome dinner.

Included meals: breakfast (in flight), dinner

## DAY 3: SIGHTSEEING OF PALERMO AND MONREALE

This morning, you'll have a guided tour of bay-side Palermo, situated at the foot of Mount Pellegrino. Pass the city's *palazzi*, and visit the Palermo Cathedral to view the stunning artwork of the Capella Palatina. Make your way through the Four Corners, where four Spanish Baroque palaces stand, and the so-called "Fountain of Shame." Next, continue to nearby Monreale for a visit to the town's magnificent Norman cathedral, whose mosaics are comparable to those of Istanbul's Hagia Sophia.

Included meal: breakfast

Included entrances: Palermo Cathedral, Capella Palatina, Cathedral of Monreale

## DAY 4: FREE DAY IN PALERMO

You'll find plenty of possibilities for your free day in Palermo. Visit the collection of art in the Galleria Regionale della Sicilia, study the eclectic mix of architectural styles in the Duomo, shop the open-air stalls of the Vucciria Market or visit the Marionette Museum. Be sure to leave time for gelato sampling—the Italian style of ice cream was invented right here in Palermo. Alternatively, join an optional excursion to medieval Erice and Segesta. Included meal: breakfast

## DAY 5: AGRIGENTO

Travel south through the Sicilian countryside to Agrigento. Here, enjoy a guided tour of its fascinating Greek ruins. Then, continue on to Syracuse and arrive in time for an included dinner.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Included entrance: Greek ruins

## DAY 6: SIGHTSEEING IN SYRACUSE

Not long after its founding in 734 B.C., Syracuse rivaled Athens and Rome for political power and cultural importance. Plato considered it a model for the ideal city. On your guided tour, enter the Archaeological Park for a visit to the most complete ancient Greek theater in existence. Note the way that the natural setting is incorporated into the design of the theater, where Aeschylus premiered many of his works. Then, tour the

## 11-DAY TOUR INCLUDES

- Round-trip air transportation with a major airline and airport transfers
- The services of your bilingual Tour Director
- A professional local guide in Palermo, Monreale, Agrigento, Syracuse and Taormina
- 9 nights accommodations in well-located hotels, including baggage handling
- Buffet breakfast daily; 3 three-course dinners, including wine or beer
- Private deluxe motor coach
- Personal audio headset and entrance fees to select sites

## GUIDED SIGHTSEEING

**DAY 3:** Palermo and Monreale

**DAY 5:** Agrigento Ruins

**DAY 6:** Syracuse

**DAY 8:** Taormina

## Tour Highlight

Greta Garbo, who vacationed in Taormina under the pseudonym "Harriet Brown," tried to keep it a secret, but the word is out: Taormina, situated on a mountaintop overlooking the Ionian Sea, is one of the most beautiful cities in all of Europe. Enjoy a collection of medieval alleys, flowered balconies and unmatched sunset views.

## Insider's Tip

For a taste of more modern Sicilian myth, take a pilgrimage to the "Our Lady of Tears" Sanctuary, near the Archaeological Park and Holiday Inn in Syracuse. Rumor tells of a Madonna statue located on this site that shed human tears for five days in 1953.



Pasta, basil and tomatoes—a simple yet authentic dish



The Valley of the Temples in seaside Agrigento

massive Paradise Quarry and gardens, featuring the cave that Caravaggio dubbed “The Ear of Dionysius” for its unique acoustics. Also included is a visit to an ancient Roman amphitheater. Later, cross a bridge to the Island of Ortygia, where your guide leads a walking tour of this beautiful old city of Syracuse. Highlights include the 6th-century Temple of Apollo, the Duomo and the harbor-front fountain.

Included meal: breakfast

Included entrance: Syracuse Greek Theater

**DAY 7: FREE DAY IN SYRACUSE**

Spend the day as you like in Syracuse. Consider a visit to the Archaeological Museum or the more unusual Papyrus Museum. Alternatively, you might opt for an excursion to a traditional Sicilian manor house, owned and operated by a Sicilian contessa. There, you'll enjoy appetizers, a gourmet meal, desserts and a tour of the farm's facilities.

Included meal: breakfast

**DAY 8: TAORMINA SIGHTSEEING**

Journey past the city of Catania and Mount Etna to Taormina, situated on the island's northernmost point. A local guide introduces you to this scenic town perched high above the sea. Pass the Duomo, the Corso Umberto I and the Palazzo Corvaia, seat of the first Sicilian parliament. Then, visit the town's 2nd-century Greek theater, whose stunning location overlooking the coast—with Mount Etna providing a natural background—reflects how seriously the ancient Greeks took the importance

of drama. Performances are still held here today during the summer. This evening, you're invited to our optional *Traditional Sicilian Dinner & Wine Tasting*.

Included meal: breakfast

Included entrance: Greek theater ruins

**DAY 9: FREE DAY IN TAORMINA REGION**

With a free day in the Taormina region, you might choose to visit the town's 14th- and 15th-century palaces. Or, you could opt to take our *Hidden Sicily* excursion to delve into Savoca and Forza d'Agrò, two traditional Sicilian villages that served as sets for Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather*.

Included meal: breakfast

**DAY 10: FREE DAY IN TAORMINA REGION**

From magnificent beaches to cliff walks, spend another free day soaking in the Taormina's region's natural beauty. Alternatively, join a full-day optional excursion to explore the mountainous landscapes of Mount Etna. Dinner is included this evening.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

**DAY 11: DEPARTURE**

If you're not continuing on our tour extension to Rome, a Go Ahead representative escorts you to the airport in Catania for your return flight home.

Included meal: breakfast

(In the case of early morning departures, breakfast may not be provided.)

**EXTEND YOUR STAY**

**Rome**

**2 nights**

**DAY 11:** Travel to the airport for your flight to Rome. Upon arrival, a Go Ahead representative greets you and oversees hotel check-in. Then, follow in the footsteps of the caesars during an included excursion to imperial Rome, featuring a guided tour of the Colosseum.

Included meal: breakfast

**DAY 12:** Spend a free day in Rome however you choose. Take in art and architecture at every turn—from relics of Caesar's reign to treasures of the Renaissance. Or, you could join today's optional sightseeing tour of *Vatican City*, featuring visits to the Vatican Museums, St. Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel. Opt to end the day at our *Dinner with Tenors*, an evening of food and live opera music.

Included meal: breakfast

**DAY 13:** Board your return flight home.

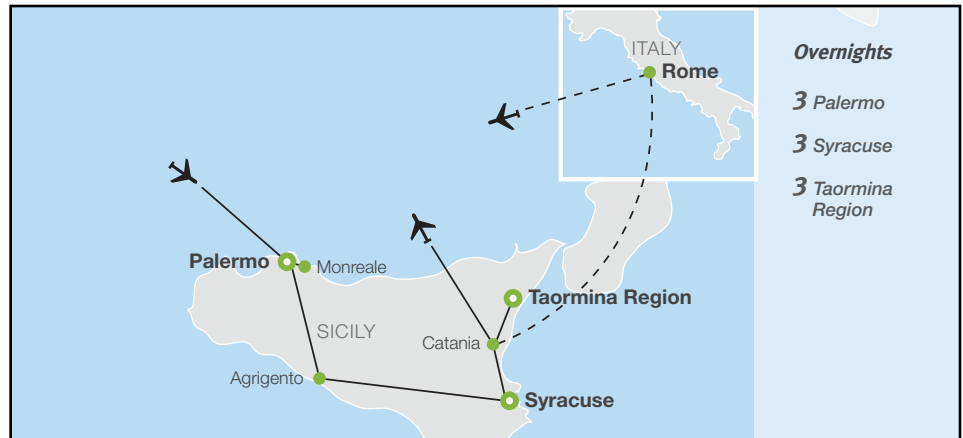
Included meal: breakfast

(In the case of early morning departures, breakfast may not be provided.)

Extension is available on select departure dates, and space is limited. Please call early to hold your spot. Extension also requires a minimum of 10 travelers.



The Colosseum, a lasting icon of imperial Rome



### Travel Pace: 3

Travel pace is based on criteria such as length of tour, number of cities visited, number of included activities, as well as length of flights and land transfers.

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 - leisurely   | 3 - active      |
| 2 - comfortable | 4 - challenging |

### Walking on Tour

Sicily's older streets and ancient ruins demand a bit more attention when walking. Otherwise, the degree of activity on this tour is moderate. Sightseeing of Palermo is conducted by private motor coach, while sightseeing in Agrigento, Syracuse's ruins, the island of Ortygia and Taormina is done on foot. Be aware of some uneven terrain and hilly locations in Agrigento and Taormina. Those taking the optional excursion to Mount Etna should be prepared for some tougher walking and hiking conditions. Sturdy walking shoes or hiking boots are strongly advised.

### Visit [goaheadtours.com](http://goaheadtours.com) for:

- Enhanced destination information
- Featured Tour Directors
- Personalized "My Account" Page
- Tour planning

### Climate

The following guide provides the average temperatures for a sampling of the regions on your itinerary.

#### PALERMO

Jan-Feb	51°-59°F / 11°-15°C
Mar	52°-61°F / 11°-16°C
Apr	55°-64°F / 13°-18°C
May	61°-70°F / 16°-21°C
June	68°-77°F / 20°-25°C
July-Aug	74°-84°F / 23°-29°C
Sep	72°-80°F / 22°-27°C
Oct	66°-74°F / 19°-23°C
Nov	58°-66°F / 14°-19°C
Dec	54°-61°F / 12°-16°C

#### ROME (ON EXTENSION)

Jan-Feb	39°-55°F / 9°-13°C
Mar	43°-59°F / 6°-15°C
Apr	47°-63°F / 8°-17°C
May	54°-71°F / 12°-22°C
June	61°-77°F / 16°-25°C
July-Aug	66°-83°F / 19°-28°C
Sep	62°-79°F / 17°-26°C
Oct	56°-71°F / 13°-22°C
Nov	46°-62°F / 8°-17°C
Dec	42°-57°F / 6°-14°C

# Pre-departure information for your tour

## PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

In order to enter Italy, U.S. and Canadian citizens need a valid passport. The expiration date must extend at least six months beyond the date of your return home. No visa is required for U.S. or Canadian citizens. If you're not a U.S. or Canadian citizen, you must contact the Italian consulate for your specific entry requirements.

## AIRPORT AND DEPARTURE TAXES

All airport and departure taxes for this tour are included in the total trip cost printed on your invoice.

## BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE

Airlines have varying weight restrictions on luggage. Some airlines may impose additional charges if you choose to check any baggage. Please contact your airline or refer to its website for detailed information regarding your airline's checked baggage policies. Bear in mind that your luggage will probably weigh more on your return trip due to souvenir shopping. We allow only one suitcase per person. One carry-on bag is also permitted, provided that it does not exceed 45 inches (length + width + height). There may be times when you'll have to handle your own bags, and you'll find that lightweight luggage provides a distinct advantage. Make sure you label your baggage and carry valuables, medication and documents in your carry-on luggage.

## CLOTHING AND PACKING TIPS

To ensure you're comfortable while out exploring, we recommend packing lightweight, loose-fitting clothing that can be easily layered. For sightseeing, we suggest bringing a sturdy pair of walking shoes or sneakers, as well as a lightweight sports jacket or rain wear. If you're planning a visit to a high-end restaurant or performance, you may also want to bring dressier attire. Also, please remember that it's preferable to avoid showing bare legs or shoulders during visits to churches or other religious sites (entrance may be denied on this basis).

## HEALTH

There are no major health risks associated with traveling to Sicily. Be sure to check with your doctor or healthcare provider for the latest updates and overseas travel requirements.

## CUISINE

Most of the staples of the Italian diet have already become favorites in America, but on your tour, be sure to try those less familiar pasta sauces and the vast range of cured hams, cheeses, rustic breads and desserts. In addition, Sicilian cooking is distinguished by its blending of Italian, African, Arab and even Spanish influences. Known for its fresh produce (especially eggplant, tomatoes and capers), spicy flavors and delicious seafood combinations, popular dishes include *caponata*, eggplant and caper salad; *insalata di mare*, seafood salad; *spaghetti alla Norma*, pasta with eggplant; *cozze alla marinara*, mussels steamed in wine; and *pollo alla Marsala*, chicken marinated in Marsala wine.

Contrary to popular belief, Sicilian pizza does not usually come in the square, bulky form. In fact, most Sicilians consider pizza the Neapolitan style, and most restaurants serving pizza will serve it thin-crust. The proper name for our version of "Sicilian pizza" is *sfincione*, actually more of a pastry or focaccia, usually topped with seafood, olives, eggplant or other fresh produce.

Drink and dessert fare are also some of the best in all of Italy. Sicilian wines are a hidden gem (and often inexpensive), and Sicily boasts some of Italy's best gelato and cannoli.

## TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

Round-trip flights arrive in Palermo and depart from Catania (or Rome on the tour extension). When you first arrive in Palermo, a Go Ahead representative will meet you at the airport. Please remain in the arrival lounge, as the representative might be escorting one of your fellow travelers to the bus at the time of your arrival.

Included transportation is by private motor coach. In your free time, most of Sicily's locations are best accessed on foot. Local city buses in Palermo and Syracuse can break up periods of walking. Taxis are also useful, particularly in connecting downtown Syracuse (where most hotels are located) to the island of Ortygia (where most shops and restaurants are). In Taormina, local buses connect the beachfront city of Naxos to Taormina proper. You can also ride a funicular up to Taormina's city center.

## ELECTRICITY

Italy operates on the European standard 220 volts.

## TIME ZONES

Italy is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and six hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST). When it's noon in New York, it's 6 p.m. in Palermo.

## CURRENCY

The euro is the currency you'll be using on your tour. Better rates of exchange are usually available in Italy, although it's worth ordering some currency from your local bank to use when you first arrive. We advise that you take debit/bank cards and credit cards, which can be exchanged for cash at local banks, as needed. You can use most debit/credit cards at ATMs on the international networks Cirrus and Plus, but make sure to check with your home bank about withdrawal fees. We suggest informing your bank and credit card company of your travel plans, so they don't confuse your international purchases for fraudulent charges.

## TIPPING

At the conclusion of your tour, it's customary to offer your Tour Director and driver a gratuity. We recommend tipping in your tour country's currency, the equivalent of \$3USD/CAD per person per day for your driver and \$6USD/CAD to \$9USD/CAD per person per day for your Tour Director. If applicable, we also recommend the equivalent of \$2USD/CAD per local guide. Tips can only be paid in cash. Please keep current local currency exchange rates in mind when tipping.

## PURCHASING OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS ON TOUR

If you have not yet purchased your optional excursions, you may be able to do so while on your tour. Your Tour Director will only accept cash (in USD only), Visa, MasterCard or American Express as payment for optional excursions. Please be advised that if you pay for an excursion by credit card while on tour, it may take up to three months for your card to be charged. Some optional excursions may only be purchased in advance. See the separate "Optional Excursions" sheet for more information.

International travel is, by its very nature, unpredictable. We must therefore reserve the right to change this itinerary without advanced notice to meet with local conditions at the time of travel. We appreciate your understanding. Please refer to our website for terms & conditions, dates and prices.

