



# Sicilian Trilogy Tour

Sicilian Trilogy Tour, an amazing 10 days private tour of Sicily exploring the most important local highlights



Location

**Palermo**



Days

**10**



Duration

**ND**



Category



Season

**Year Round**



Tour Type

**Private**

## TOUR OVERVIEW

Sicilian Trilogy Tour | 10 days

Season: all year available on request

9 nights/10 days

Palermo (4 night) Syracuse (2 night) Taormina (3 night)

Hotel Package: not included but available on request

Airline Tickets: not purchased by us

Day 1 – Palermo airport > Town

Day 2 – Palermo Half Day Walking Tour

Day 3 – Palermo > Cefalù and Monreale > Palermo

Day 4 – Palermo > Erice, Olive Oil and Segesta > Palermo

Day 5 – Palermo > Agrigento and Piazza Armerina > Syracuse

Day 6 – Syracuse Half Day

Day 7 – Syracuse > Modica and Ragusa Ibla > Taormina

Day 8 – Taormina > Etna Volcano and Winery > Taormina

Day 9 – Relax in Taormina

Day 10 – Taormina > Catania airport

Featured Licensed Local Guide Recommended for the above tour

-Palermo | Already Included in the tour costs

-Monreale, to visit the Dome

-Segesta, to visit the Temple

-Agrigento, to visit the Valley of the Temples

-Syracusa, half day walking tour | Already Included in the tour costs

-Taormina, half day to visit the Greek-Roman Theatre and Corvaja Palace

The rates for the above services are available on request.

TOUR CODE: TRILOGY10

# TOUR ITINERARY



Day 1

## Palermo airport > Town

Private vehicle and Italian speaking chauffeur disposal: transfer in only

Welcome to the warm, beautiful and pleasant island of Sicily! Upon arrival at Palermo Airport please proceed through the Passport Control and collect your luggage inside the customs area. Then meet the driver showing a sign with your name and a short drive takes you to the town.



Day 2

## Palermo Half Day Walking Tour

English speaking guide disposal: half day from h 9AM

Today meet the local guide at hotel and start a lovely walking tour to explore Palermo. Our first stop is at the Palatine Chapel (Admission fee: not included), a finest example of Arab-Norman art in Palermo. Built by Roger II from 1130 to 1140, the chapel is adorned with extraordinary Norman-Byzantine mosaics. 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. 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". The last but not the least is our stop at the Ballarò Open Air Market a place overflowing with beautiful fresh fish, and local vegetables and cheeses. Originating from the era when Sicily was occupied by the moors, this 1000 year old market has run much in the same manner for centuries. It has strong Arab influences, resembling an eastern souk, and these influences are also evident in the merchandise itself. Next to mounds of ricotta and caciocavallo cheeses, barrels of olives and fat slabs of swordfish sit saffron and other spices, as well as sacks of beans and gorgeous indigenous fruits and local vegetables. Here you will have the opportunity to taste a typical palermitano dish, such as the famous Panelle (a thin paste of crushed ceci/garbanzo beans rolled into sheets, fried and served in pizza-like slices).



Day 3

## Palermo > Cefalù and Monreale > Palermo

Private vehicle and English speaking driver disposal: full day from h 9AM

Today meet the driver at hotel and in one hour driving we will join the lovely village of Cefalù. While Cefalù's origins go back to at least Greek times, 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 Dome in Monreale. Exploring the town we will join the Lavatory, which is fed by a natural spring and the Osterio Magno which,

according to tradition was King Roger's very own residence.

This afternoon, on the way back to Palermo, we will stop in Monreale to see where Arab-Norman art and architecture reached its pinnacle in the Duomo (Tips: not included), launched in 1174 by William II. It represents scenes from the Old and New Testaments all in golden mosaics.

We then return to Palermo.



Day 4

## Palermo > Erice, Olive Oil and Segesta > Palermo

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

Today departure for 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 an olive oil farmhouse to taste genuine dishes and enjoy the olive oil tastings

This afternoon onto Segesta (Admission fee: not included) one of the major cities of the Elymian people, one of the three indigenous peoples of Sicily. Segesta's ancient Greek temple can make a valid claim to being the best preserved in the world, and its amphitheatre boasts a hilltop position on Mount Barbaro second to none. The archeological site, about seventy kilometers southwest of Palermo, reflects the presence of several ancient civilizations, beginning with the elusive Elymians. While the magnificent Doric temple, though (strictly speaking) never completed - as the roof was never added and the pillars never fluted - is impressive, it is just the highlight of a large archeological park.

Later return to Palermo.



Day 5

## Palermo > Agrigento and Piazza Armerina > Syracuse

Private Vehicle and English Speaking Driver Disposal: full day from h 8AM

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 Hephaestos, 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 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".

Later onto Syracuse.



## Day 6

### Syracuse Half Day

Private taxi disposal: from Ortigia to the Archaeological Park and return

English speaking guide disposal: half day from h 9AM

Today meet the local guide at hotel and catch on a taxi to move to the Archaeological Park (Admission fee: not included), highlights of which are the Greek Theatre, the Roman Amphitheatre and the Paradise Quarry. Then back to Ortigia, the heart of the city center. This delightful pedestrian small island, connected with Syracuse by the Umberto Bridge, is home to the wonderful Cathedral built on the site of an ancient Temple of Athena as can clearly be seen from the original Doric columns that were incorporated into the building's main structure. Also on this square is the beautifully symmetrical Baroque Palazzo Beneventano and the church of Santa Lucia, the town's patron saint. Later to the colourful daily Street Market, which sells a fantastic array of fruit, vegetables, fish and meat.

This afternoon is at leisure



## Day 7

### Syracuse > Modica and Ragusa Ibla > Taormina

Private vehicle and English speaking driver disposal: full day from h 9AM

Today meet the driver at hotel and drive to Ragusa Ibla, one of the most picturesque towns in Sicily. The view from the upper town over Ragusa Ibla on its own separate hilltop is quite breathtaking. One of the UNESCO-listed Baroque towns of south-eastern Sicily, Ragusa is also one of the principal filming locations for the Sicilian Detective Saga Il Commissario Montalbano (Montalbano Inspector), a series which has done wonders for publicising the beauty of this area.

This afternoon 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. 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 we drive onto Taormina.



Day 8

## Taormina > Etna Volcano Off Road Experience and Winery > Taormina

Private 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.

Lunch in a local winery with wine tastings.

This afternoon we then return to Taormina



Day 9

## Relax in Taormina

Today is at leisure for your independent walk in the Corso Umberto Street, the core of the town. From here you can join the Greek Theatre (Admission fee: not included), built for the most part of brick, and is therefore probably of Roman date, though the plan and arrangement are in accordance with those of Greek, rather than Roman, theatres; It is one of the world's most popular tourist attractions, so that Johann Wolfgang Goethe in his famous “Journey to Italy” wrote: “No theater audience has never had such a sight in front of him.” The highlight of today walking tour is for sure go up using the old steps up to the top of the theatre to admire an amazing view of the Taormina Bay and the Etna volcano, the view from here is amazing and unforgettable.

The balance of the day is at leisure.



Day 10

## Taormina > Catania airport

Private vehicle and Italian speaking chauffeur disposal: transfer out only

Today transfer to the airport.

## TOUR MAP



## WHAT IS INCLUDED?



All sightseeing, tasting and excursions as specified in the itinerary



Booking Fee



English speaking Driver

## NOT INCLUDED



Admission fees



Beverage and meal not specified



Gratuities and tips



Hotel accommodation



Intercontinental/Local Flights



Optional Excursions



Travel Insurance