



A TASTE OF SICILY

OCTOBER 20TH - 30TH 2023

Halfway between Europe and Africa and commanding the passage between the east and west parts of the Mediterranean Sea, the island of Sicily has always been at the crossroads of history. Settled by Greeks, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Vikings, and Normans, the island has an unparalleled mixture of cultural heritage.

We'll enter into the life of this gorgeous and mysterious island in the capital, Palermo, and then make our way around the south of the island to the east coast. We'll explore the countryside and visit a stunning collection of medieval towns that each vies for the title of "Most Beautiful." Here, architecture recalls a multitude of times and places: Agrigento, with its dramatic ancient ruins, the perched mountain-top town of Erice, and the magnificent site at Siracusa.

With a balance of guided excursions and leisure time to explore at your own pace, you'll have an opportunity to experience Sicily's winding medieval streets, glittering beaches, and, of course, the incredible variety of its food and wine. It is hardly surprising that each of the many cultures that have passed through this island have all left behind some vestige of their particular culinary tastes.

The differences here from the mainland are so great that even Sicilians talk of "going to Italy," and consider their island an extraordinary land apart.

Your traveling party will be escorted by Discover Europe's Fiona Bennett as she leads you through scenic landscapes and ancient towns on this customized tour.

Don't want your journey to end just yet? Continue your travels with the optional *Malta* extension!



THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED): \$ 4980
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$ 1190

Airfares are available from many U.S. cities. Please call for details.

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

- HOTELS:** 9 nights' accommodation at first-class hotels, including all hotel taxes and service charges
- COACHING:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- MEALS:** Breakfast daily, 4 lunches, and 5 dinners
- EXPENSES:** Portage of one large suitcase per person
- ENTRANCES:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary
- GUIDES:** Discover Europe guide throughout and local guides where indicated

Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour. Insurance information will be e-mailed to each registrant upon receipt of deposit.

OPTIONAL MALTA EXTENSION:

The cost of the Malta Extension is **\$1880** per person, double occupancy (single supplement: **\$480**). This includes the one way flight from Catania to Valletta, 3 nights' accommodation at a first-class hotel, breakfast daily, 2 dinners, your Discover Europe tour guide throughout, local guides, all entrance fees, ground and ferry transportation as detailed in the itinerary, baggage handling of one large suitcase per person.

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20TH - Departure from your gateway city. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21ST - Your arrival in Palermo will be met for the transfer to our centrally located hotel. There will be time to unpack and relax before we embark upon an afternoon walking tour of the city center with a local guide. Palermo is a vibrant city whose glorious past is visible everywhere in its bustling open-air markets and its rich collection of monuments, including the 12th-century Arab-Norman Capella Palatina and the 18th-century gardens of Parco della Favorita e Giardini della Palazzina Cinese. Dinner this evening is included. **(D) OVERNIGHT: PALERMO**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22ND - We begin this morning by meeting our host/chef at the Porta Carini, the gateway to one of the most famous markets in the city, the Capo. Here we will purchase the ingredients for our 3 course lunch, prepared under the direction of our host in their kitchen. After lunch—and a possible siesta!—the rest of the afternoon and evening are free for personal exploration. **(B, L) OVERNIGHT: PALERMO**

MONDAY, OCTOBER 23RD - Leaving the capital we drive along the coast to the town of Trapani, on the very northwest corner of the island. From here we take the cable car up to the fortified medieval town of Erice. We will have time to wander around this extraordinary mountain perch with its breathtaking views. There will be time for lunch – but save some room because Erice is also famous for its biscuits (originally made by the nuns) so we will visit La Pasticceria

Maria Grammatica to try her famous almond biscuits and marzipan pastries. This afternoon we will make our way back down to our hotel in the centre of Trapani. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: TRAPANI**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24TH - This morning we will take a boat trip to the Aegadian Island of Favignana just off the coast. These islands were long associated with the ceremony of the Matanza, the capturing of tuna fish. We will visit the Tonnara, the former tuna fish factory run by the Florio family which is now an archaeological museum housed within this extraordinary building. The Villa Florio merits a quick visit then we will enjoy a Tuna fish lunch. After lunch we will take a boat trip around the Island, weather permitting, where we can see the spectacular rock formations and the beautiful beaches. We return to Trapani for a free evening. **(B, L) OVERNIGHT: TRAPANI**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25TH - Driving south along the coast, we'll pass the extraordinary salt pans, just outside the city, and continue to the ancient Punic site of Mozia—once as important as Carthage in the Mediterranean—situated on its own island. It is thanks to Joseph Whitaker of the famous Marsala wines, that the site was excavated and preserved after he bought the island. The sweet wine he produced was traditionally sold to the British navy. After a visit to the small museum on the island, we'll return to the mainland for a tour of a Marsala winery with tasting and lunch included. We will continue along the south coast to our hotel in Agrigento for dinner. **(B, L, D) OVERNIGHT: AGRIGENTO**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26TH - This morning we explore the world famous Greek site of the Valle dei Templi with a local guide. A marvellous collection of temples, the earliest dating from 581 BC, both fascinating and enigmatic. We will visit the archaeological museum full of rich artifacts and have a tour of the site. The rest of the day is free. **(B) OVERNIGHT: AGRIGENTO**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27TH - Continuing along the coast, our first stop this morning is the wonderful Castello di Donnafugata. We'll tour the castle and gardens and then drive the short distance into Ragusa, the Baroque capital of Sicily. There will be time to explore and find lunch before we make the beautiful mountain drive to Noto. Here we will visit the Palazzo Villadorata, an 18th-century fantastical aristocratic home. We end the day at our hotel in Siracusa, where dinner awaits us. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: SIRACUSA**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28TH - This morning we drive to Solarino, a small town up in the hills behind Siracusa. Here we will visit a family-run olive oil and citrus producer. We'll tour the lemon groves and sample their different oils together with a variety of other local produce. We return to Siracusa to enjoy a free afternoon and evening. **(B, L) OVERNIGHT: SIRACUSA**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29TH - Once rivaling Athens in splendor and power, we will spend our day in Siracusa. We'll visit the ruins of the Greek amphitheater, dug almost entirely out of the rock on the Temenite hill, marvel at the variety on display at the central Fish Market, and at Siracusa's southern end, on the medieval island of Ortygia, we'll visit Piazza Archimedes' spectacular fountains and Piazza del Duomo, one of Italy's most beautiful piazzas. There will be some free time before we gather for another cooking class. This evening we feast on the results of our labours! **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: SIRACUSA**



ORTYGIA

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30TH - Morning transfer to nearby Catania Airport for returning flights to the US. Alternatively, why not stay on and join us for a few days on the island of Malta? **(B)**

Key to included meals: B - breakfast, L - lunch, D - dinner

OPTIONAL MALTA EXTENSION

MONDAY OCTOBER 30TH - This morning, we board a direct flight to Malta where we will be met for the transfer to our fabulous hotel in the city center. After time to unpack and relax, we will gather for a walking tour of Valletta with a local guide, we'll wander along Republic Street, past the Auberge de Castille and then onto the Upper Barrakka Gardens for an incredible view of "Fortress Malta." We'll include visits to the Grand Master's palace, the National Museum of Archeology and St. John's Co-Cathedral, where we will marvel at Caravaggio's *The Beheading of St John the Baptist*. The rest of the afternoon is free to explore the city. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: VALLETTA**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31ST - Our full day excursion begins with a visit to the Hypogeum of Hal Saffieni. This is an underground mausoleum, carved from solid rock and dating from around 5000 years ago! It has only recently been reopened to the public. Our next stop is the charming, fishing village of Marsaxlokk and on our way back to our hotel we'll visit the Neolithic Temple of Hagar Qim, believed to have been a fertility shrine, and well known for the 'Venus of Malta' statue. The evening is free. **(B) OVERNIGHT: VALLETTA**

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST - Today brings an excursion to the neighboring island of Gozo, a short 20 minute ferry ride away. We'll visit the Xaghra plateau and the temples of Ggantija; at 5,500 years old they were, until recently, claimed to be the oldest free-standing stone structures in the world. We continue on to the Citadel, a fortified city that was the administrative capital of the independent Roman province of Gozo. Our farewell dinner will be at a local restaurant this evening when we return to Valletta. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: VALLETTA**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND - Morning transfers to Valletta Airport for returning flights to the US. **(B)**



MALTA