

# THE BEST OF SICILY: with Anna and Ashley

## Palermo, Monreale, Cefalù, Corleone, Agrigento, Syracuse, Noto, Marzamemi, Etna, and Taormina



**Proposed Dates: October 6th to October 18th 2025**

If Italy, comparing landmass, fits into the state of Arizona, then Sicily is Massachusetts, and for how dense it is with history and culture, essentially it could be considered a country in its own right! For this reason, we (Ashley and I) felt that to try and do both Sicily and Malta in 13 days would not do her justice.

Sitting strategically in the middle of the Mediterranean, its desirable location meant that it was frequently coveted by those looking to conquer new territories. While many cities and regions suffered at the hands of their conquerors, it would seem that for most of its history, those who came, embraced what was already there, and merely added to it. This is how Sicily has come to be known for its distinctive and complex culture; from Byzantine to Baroque, and both what came before and what was beyond. It is a culture that you can devour with all five senses. Our 13-day journey will allow you to take it all in, balancing the big, important sights with some 'off the beaten track'.

### ACCOMMODATION - 4 Star Hotels

- 4 nights in Palermo
- 1 night in the Valley of the Temples
- 4 nights in Syracuse
- 3 nights Taormina

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Guided tour of Palermo; Praetorian Fountain, San Domenico Cloister, I Segreti del Chiostro (nun sweets!), San Cataldo Church, Gesù di Casa Professa Church, The Quattro Canti, Norman Palace, and to finish entrance and tour of the Palermo Cathedral
- Private cooking class in a Sicilian villa
- Excursion to Monreale and Cefalù
- Learn about the Mafia and its history in Corleone
- Dinner overlooking the Valley of the Temples
- Guided tour of the Valley of the Temples
- Walking tour of the Island of Ortigia
- Excursion to the Queen of Sicilian Baroque, Noto, and its nearby gem, fishing village Marzamemi
- Wine tasting lunch in winery in the foothills of Mount Etna
- Of White Lotus fame, Taormina will not disappoint, with its epic views of the coast and delicious, fresh granitas.



### DAY 1: Arrive in Palermo

When you arrive at the Palermo airport, there will be a driver waiting for you at the arrivals exit. They will bring you directly to the hotel where you will meet your tour leader, check-in and relax. Enjoy a stroll around Palermo to shake off your jetlag and then meet in the hotel for an orientation cocktail. We will have an early "Welcome to Sicily" dinner together in a restaurant close to the hotel.

### DAY 2: Slow Walking Tour of Palermo

A melting pot of culture in more ways than one, Palermo's 2700 years, influenced by Greeks, Romans, Arabs and the Norman Conquest, weaves a rich historical and cultural tapestry evidenced in part by its Romanesque, Gothic, Baroque and Art Nouveau churches, palaces and buildings. Explore the historical center with Anna and Ashley. After lunch we will finish up with a guided tour of the Palermo Cathedral Complex (photo below).



### DAY 3: Private Cooking Class

Learn the secrets behind the wonderful, traditional dishes of Sicily. Sicily's cuisine is as fascinating as its culture, with traces of Greek, Spanish, French, Jewish, and Arab influence.

### DAY 4: Excursion to Monreale and Cefalù

A short drive from Palermo, we will begin our day in Monreale to visit one of Sicily's most important sites, the 12th century Norman Cathedral. In the afternoon we can relax and explore the postcard perfect, seaside town of Cefalù.

### DAY 5: Palermo via Corleone to Agrigento

To get to Agrigento we need to traverse the island from North to South, along the way we will stop in Corleone to take a tour of the town that is most renowned for its connections to the mafia.

On arrival in Agrigento we will check-in and get ready for a wonderful dinner with views of the Valley of the Temples which is lit up by night.



### **DAY 6: The Valley of the Temples**

This UNESCO world heritage listed site was once one of the most important cities in the ancient world which remains today the largest, best-preserved collection of ancient Greek buildings outside of Greece itself. We will not have to make sense of it on our own, our expert guide will help us recreate and understand this ancient civilization.

This is a day for wearing sensible shoes as there will of course be uneven terrain.



### **DAY 7: Syracuse, Island of Ortigia**

A powerful and influential city in the ancient world, Syracuse is recognized for its rich Greek and Roman history, culture, amphitheatres, architecture, and as the birthplace and home of the pre-eminent mathematician and engineer Archimedes. Together with our local guide, we will unravel the history and most important sights of Syracuse on a slow paced walking tour of the city.

### **DAY 8: Free Day in Syracuse**

We will give you a list of places that you can visit or you can just take it easy and enjoy strolling and shopping along the streets and waterfront.

### **DAY 9: Noto and Marzamemi**

In the morning we will visit Noto, the birth place of Sicilian Baroque, easily recognizable for its striking monuments made from yellow limestone. In the afternoon, we will take a short drive to the fishing village, Marzamemi. Once famous for tuna fishing and canning, it is now a charming town with artisan shops and fish restaurants.



### **DAY 10: Syracuse via Etna to Taormina**

We will leave Syracuse behind and as we make our way up to Taormina, stop along the way to visit a winery in the foothills of Mt Etna. Here we will taste first hand how the minerals from the volcanic soil influence the flavors in the wine while enjoying local food snacks and specialities.

On arrival in the afternoon in Taormina, we will check-in to our hotel.

In the evening you are free to explore.

### **DAY 11: Taormina**

Hopefully by October we will no longer have to battle the crowds along the streets of Taormina and we will be able to enjoy our guided tour, strolling and soaking up the history and culture. Arguably Sicily's and one of Italy's most picturesque towns.

### **DAY 12: Taormina & Farewell Dinner**

Visit museums, visit the famous cannoli workshop and bakery, take the cable car down to Isola Bella, or just soak up the sun and do some

### **DAY 13: Catania Airport, Port, or Station**

After breakfast we say goodbye. We will organize individual transfers to the Catania airport, bus/train station, or boat port. From here you can return home, continue on to Malta (by plane or boat), or extend your travels to other destinations.

If you are leaving from Palermo airport, a transfer can be organized on request, however an additional fee will apply.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 12 nights of accommodation in 4-star hotels, sharing in double/twin rooms.
- 19 included meals:
  - 12 hotel breakfasts
  - 5 dinners
  - 1 private cooking class with lunch
  - 1 wine tasting lunch
- Wine, water, and coffee with lunch and dinner (sufficient, not unlimited).
- Transfers and transport by private air-conditioned coach bus.
- Assistance of a professional, English speaking tour director for the length of the tour.
- Comprehensive program of sightseeing and experiences:

### **Private Transport in Sicily**

Once we leave Palermo we will travel together with our expert bus driver for the duration of the tour.

**Unique Cooking Class** In an exclusive location, explore Sicilian culture through its traditional recipes.

**Corleone Mafia Tour** with AddioPizzo formed by locals who actively support the Anti-Mafia Movement.

**Specialized Guide** to navigate us around the Valley of the Temples, recreating what would have been one of ancient Sicily's most important civilizations.

**Full day tour of Syracuse** Taking the day at our own pace, we will cover the history and sights as well as pointing out great places to spend your free day.

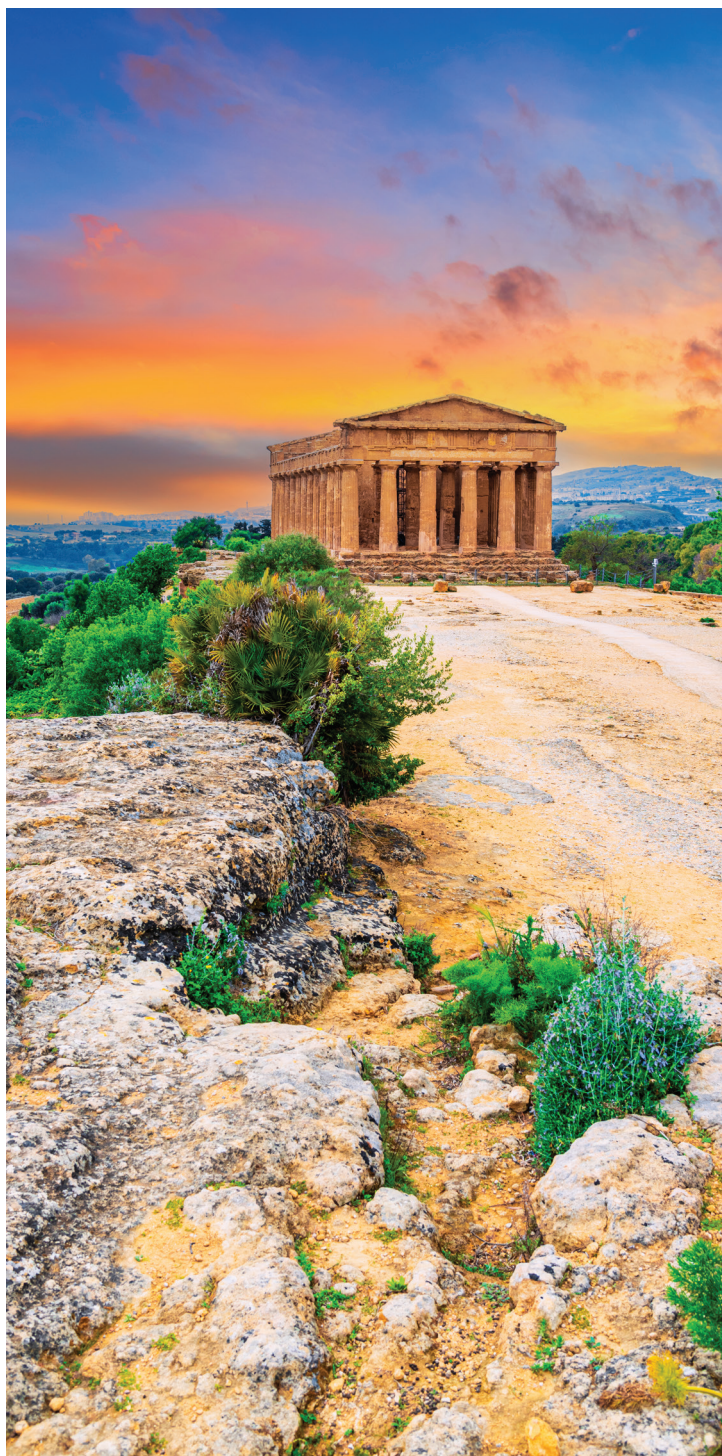
### **Winery in the foothills of Mt Etna**

Tour of the winery and its cellars, guided tasting of their wines and lunch with a view of the volcano!

**Farewell Seafood Dinner** with a view of the coast from the town of Taormina.

- Personalized arrival transfers from the Palermo airport to the hotel.
- Personalized departure transfers from Taormina to the Catania airport, train station, or port.
- When necessary/required an audio system will be provided so that you can hear your guide from a distance.
- Hotel taxes and service charges.
- City taxes.

Note: this itinerary has taken into consideration participants with limited mobility. By this we understand that you might travel with a wheelchair or walker but you do not need it 100% of the time. There may be some occasions where it is not possible to use your wheelchair.



## PREFERRED HOTELS (or similar)

Palermo: Eurostars Centrale Palace  
Valley of Temples: Baglio della Luna  
Syracuse: Algila Charme Hotel  
Taormina: Hotel Villa Paradiso

Included: double or twin rooms for sharing as couples or friends. Single rooms available by request.

This tour is intended as a private tour only.

Tour organized by authorized travel agent and tour operator Florence And Beyond SRLS  
Via Ciro Menotti, Florence 50136, Italy.