



**SAMPLE ITINERARY**  
**for**  
**TWO WEEKS IN SICILY**

**Friday, May 12**      **Arrive in Catania, move to Siracusa**

You will arrive at the Catania (CTA) Airport on Delta #6646 at 10:30 a.m. You will meet your private driver for your transfer to Siracusa, where you will enjoy a relaxing afternoon on your own.

**Saturday, May 13**      **Siracusa**

**Full Day Ibla, Modica and Scicli (8 hours)**



Meet your private driver in the lobby of your hotel at 9:00 am and proceed to *Ibla*; the “old” *Ragusa* was destroyed in 1693 by a terrific earthquake and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century all the towns were rebuilt using the Baroque style. *Ragusa* and *Ibla* became the two historic centers of the same city. Proceeding on foot you can admire some of harmonious Baroque architectures as *Zocco* and *Bertini* buildings and you will see the staircases that connect the two towns of *Ragusa* and *Ibla*, the last one constituted by narrow lanes, arches and climbs where you can visit other beautiful Baroque buildings. *Ragusa*’s baroque architecture has earned it Unesco World Heritage status.

After that you will be driven to *Modica*, also listed as a World heritage site for its architecture and one hundred Baroque churches. This territory was also destroyed the earthquake and then rebuilt

using the Baroque style

Despite being ravaged by several earthquakes, *Modica* has maintained some of the most beautiful architecture in Sicily. The town is famous also for its chocolate and a stop at the Antique Pastry shop *Bonajuto* will be made. There you will taste different kind of chocolate prepared in the same style once used by the Ancient Aztec people. Have a break for lunch before reaching *Scicli*.

*Scicli* is a town of refined culture, characterized by gullies and grottoes, by beds of torrents and the luxurious vegetation of gardens. *Scicli* maintains a harmonious relationship between man’s work and the natural environment. Destroyed in the *Val di Noto* earthquake and rebuilt in singular late Baroque forms it’s placed in a flat plan among three hills: *San Matteo*, *Santa Croce* and *San Domenico* hills.



**Sunday, May 14**      **Syracusa**

**Tour of Syracuse and Noto (7 hours)**

*Syracuse* is magnificent town, one of the most important archaeological sites in Sicily, was founded by Greeks in 734 BC. The town fought many enemies and at last was conquered by the Romans in 212 BC. After the Romans the Arabs, the Normans and the Aragonese occupied the city.



You will first visit the Greek theater, the rope makers' grotto, and Dionisyus' Ear. You will then motor back to the old city located on the small island of *Ortigia* and there you will visit on foot Pancali Square, the ruins of the Apollo's temple dating to the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, Corso Matteotti, the main and most elegant shopping area, Archimede Square with the fountain of Artemide, the Cathedral. You shall

visit this church, which is the result of different layers of structures which were added in different times, the oldest of which belong to the great temple of Athena, dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. This visit completed you shall reach the Fountain Aretusa, overlooking the bay, on a large terrace, a freshwater spring where the papyri grow.

In the afternoon after lunch drive towards *Noto*. The current town, rebuilt after the earthquake dating 1693 on the left bank of river Asinaro, was planned on a grid system. The new city occupied a position near the Ionian Sea. The "new" Noto is a masterpiece of Sicilian Baroque, dubbed the "Stone Garden" by Cesare Brandi and is currently listed among Unesco's World Heritage Sites. The new structures are characterized by a soft tufa stone, which under sunlight takes on a typical honey tonality.

Proceeding by the imposing "Royal Gate", the main street, Corso Vittorio Emanuele, is broken by three squares, overlooked by three churches, each of which has a monumental staircase: St. Francis church with its monastery, planned and built by one of the most important architects of this period in Sicily. As you proceed along the street you will reach the second square that represents the center of the town; this is the town square with the broad and impressive stairway of the Cathedral with its vast façade and its lavish interior; the elegant Ducezio Palace, now the town hall; the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bishop's palace and the Palazzo Landolina. Concluding the architectural progression of the Corso Vittorio Emanuele is San Domenico Square, bound on one side by the convent and church of S. Domenico); the façade is the work of Rosario Gagliardi and is perhaps the most noteworthy work of Noto Baroque. Visiting Noto will be a very impressive walk through many architectural masterpieces.



### Monday, May 15      Transfer Syracuse to Agrigento with stop in Piazza Armerina

Meet your private driver in the lobby of your chosen hotel in Syracuse at 9:00 am and proceed to the town of *Piazza Armerina*.



You will meet your local guide to visit the famous *Villa Romana del Casale*, set in the green environment of the area. Before beginning the visit, you will make a short stop for refreshment. This monument represents the most important surviving documentation of Roman civilization in Sicily. This patrician villa comprises more than 40 rooms, almost all them artistically paved with mosaic floors that reproducing the Roman life. It was perhaps built approximately between the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and mid-4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and its former owner was an army officer close to the Imperial Court. This villa is yet another Unesco World Heritage Site.

Have a break for lunch before proceeding to your hotel in Agrigento.



**Tuesday, May 16      Agrigento**

**Valley of the Temples Walking Tour (2 hours)**

Enjoy a walking tour of Sicily's most important archaeological site with an expert guide to discover the remains of this important center of Greek civilization of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, that is surrounded by fragrant almond groves and ancient olive trees. Learn about the construction and visit the highlights of the site including the *Temple of Juno*, a classic example of Greek architecture, located high on a hill with magnificent views of the coastline, and the *Temple of Concordia*, known as one of the finest examples of a Doric temples in the world.

Enjoy the remainder of the day on your own.

**Wednesday, May 17      Full Day Selinunte and Castelvetrano with lunch at a traditional farmhouse (olive oil tasting and lunch) (7 hours)**

Meet your private driver and guide in the lobby of your hotel at 9:00 am and proceed to Selinunte's archaeological site.

The archaeological park at *Selinunte* is huge, incorporating Greek temples, ancient town walls, the ruins of residential and commercial buildings, countryside paths and zones not yet excavated. If you are interested in Greek Sicily, this is a very important site to visit, and the temples' setting close to the sea is wonderfully picturesque.

After that proceed to a traditional farmhouse for lunch with local food before going back to your hotel in Agrigento.

**Thursday, May 18      Transfer Agrigento to Palermo with stop in Segesta**

Meet your private driver in the lobby of your hotel in Agrigento at 9:00 am to transfer you to Palermo.

Stop along the way will be made in *Segesta* where you will meet your private guide. The temple of Segesta, solemnly placed on a hill at the foot of Mount Barbaro, is certainly among the most exciting examples of Greek architecture. Completely isolated from the urban world, its white columns stand out among the green of the landscape. Its construction dates back to the late fifth century BC, during the alliance with Athens. There was much debate about the function of the temple: the prevailing view is that the building was deliberately unburied, in order to let know of a pre-existing local place of worship, where the celebration took place outdoors.

**Friday, May 19      Palermo**

**Full Day Tour of Palermo and Monreale (7 hours)**

This tour will begin with a sightseeing tour of Palermo driving through the downtown: Politeama square, Ruggero VII Street, Massimo Theater (from exterior). A stop will be made to visit one of the most typical markets in Palermo. Then you will continue your sightseeing tour passing through Quattro Canti. And you'll stop to visit Martorana church, built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by Normans and rich in mosaics and statues. After admiring one of the most beautiful fountains in Palermo, Pretoria Square, you will continue your sightseeing tour driving along the port, passing through



the Foro Italico and reaching the Duomo Square.

The Cathedral (duomo) is a huge structure dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it has been restructured several times. The interior is rich in works of art, statues and the famous royal and imperial tombs, majestic in their simplicity: the sarcophagus of Frederick II and its wife Constance of Aragon, the tomb of Henry VI, Roger II and its daughter Constance of Hauteville. From the cathedral you will be led to the nearby Royal Palace where you will visit the Palatine Chapel. Dedicated to the Saints Peter and Paul is the finest and most harmonious example of Norman art. Built in 1132/1140, it represents a splendid combination of architecture and mosaic decoration.

Lunch on own. In the early afternoon you will be driven to Monreale, where you will visit the Cathedral, which is considered one of the finest examples of Norman architecture in Sicily, and the adjoining cloister, remaining from the Benedictine Monastery. Time at leisure in Monreale and then drive back to the hotel.

### **Saturday, May 20      Palermo**

#### **Day Trip to Erice, the Salt Road and Marsala with Florio Winery (8 hours)**



Depart Palermo with your private driver/guide and proceed towards *Erice* for a walking tour of the delightful medieval city perched on a cliff of 751 meters above the sea level, overlooking the whole Western region, the Mediterranean Sea and the Egadi Islands. You'll also sample fabulous almond cookies while you are here. Enjoy a break for lunch on your own before driving through the *Salt Road* that runs from Trapani to Marsala to see the scenic salt flats surrounded by windmills that make for an unforgettable

panorama.

This afternoon, you will make a visit to the Florio Winery, which will include a tour and wine tasting.

### **Sunday, May 21      Transfer Palermo to Taormina with a stop in Cefalù**

Meet your private driver in the lobby of your hotel at 9:00 am and proceed to *Cefalù* where you will meet your private guide.

The most important monument of the city is the Cathedral. This monument underwent many transformations; built in 1184 on the site of an existing basilica, transformed by Arabs into a mosque and then restored by the Normans to a place of Christian worship. The interior is rich in works of art, statues and famous royal and imperial tombs, majestic in their simplicity: the sarcophagus of Frederick II and its wife Constance of Aragon, the tomb of Henry VI, Roger II and its daughter Constance of Hauteville. Enjoy a visit afterwards to two beautiful gardens, Bonanno Gardens and D'Orleans' Park, followed by a break for lunch on your own before continuing on to Taormina.



### **Monday, May 22      Taormina**

#### **Half Day Taormina and Castelmola (4 hours)**

Enjoy a pleasant walking tour in *Castelmola*, a beautiful and picturesque small village that offers spectacular views over the Giardini-Naxos' bay. You will learn the history and local culture while strolling through its narrow winding streets, and will make a stop at Bar San Giorgio to enjoy a tasting of the local specialty, almond wine. Then proceed to *Taormina* for a

tour that will feature a visit to the Greco-Roman theatre where you will be able to admire the remains of the ancient theatre with a view of Mount Etna in the background. Continue with a visit to the Cathedral and end your visit with a stroll on Corso Umberto, the main street and shopping area in Taormina.

**Tuesday, May 23 Taormina**

**Full Day Mt. Etna with Winery (7 hours)**

Depart with your driver/guide for a day of exploration of *Mount Etna* and environs, traveling into the heart of the countryside past local villages and fertile fields of hazelnuts and vineyards. Journey to the base of Europe's largest active volcano, across roads lined with the remains of black lava from past eruptions, and continue up to the Silvestri crater at 6400 feet above sea level for an incredible view over the Gulf of Catania and surrounding lands. Continue through the countryside to a Sicilian winery that takes advantage of the lava-rich soil and high altitude to produce one of the best wines around. Enjoy a visit of the winery and learn about their winemaking techniques, then have a guided tasting accompanied by locally produced cheeses, salumi and vegetables. Return to your hotel in the afternoon.



**Wednesday, May 24 Taormina**

**Discover Sicilian Cooking**

Departing from hotel you will drive via motor-way reaching Catania to visit one of the most characteristic places, the fish market; a crowded and shouted site like an Arab "souk". Then you will reach a small village on the slopes of Mount Etna, Viagrande.

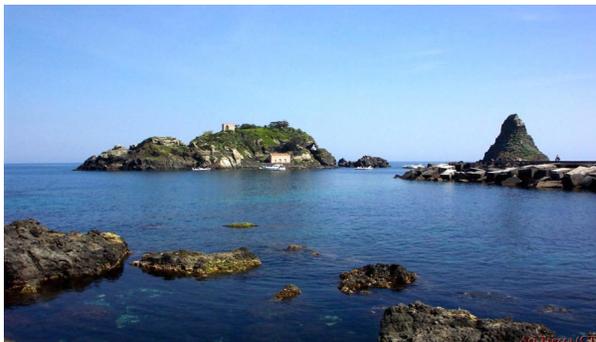
The courses are held in a typical Sicilian house of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, surrounded by green countryside, in one of the characteristic villages on the slopes of Etna. The lesson is conducted by the Chef in English and is held in her kitchen. The class is based on the most famous Sicilian recipes, focusing on pasta, meat and vegetables. During the lesson a break will be made to taste a special Sicilian drink. Guests can participate actively in the preparation of dishes and at the end a lunch, including what was prepared during the morning lesson, will be served in the garden (weather permitting). This will allow you to spend a day being in touch with Sicilian people and their customs.

**Thursday, May 25 Taormina**

**Minicruise on board your exclusive yacht along Taormina & Cyclops Coast**

Depart hotel (9:30 am) by private minivan towards the port of Giarre Riposto where you shall embark on your exclusive yacht.

Sicily's most glamorous resort, Taormina, enjoys a fabled site, its beautiful location offering views across the blue expanse of the Ionian Sea to one side and the majestic profile of Mount Etna to the other.



After the introduction of the crew, you will leave Riposto and enjoy a coastal cruise following the magnificent Cyclops' coast. The Cyclops Riviera lies northeast of Catania and stretches for 9 miles along the eastern coast of Sicily encompassing the fishing villages of Acicastello and Acitrezza. The area is frequented by locals

and tourists alike who are drawn to its views out across the Ionian Sea and the small archipelago of islands, including Lachea, and its pretty coastline populated by hand-painted fishing boats in small inlets. It also attracted Italian film director Luchino Visconti, who shot his neorealist movie *La Terra Trema* (*The Earth Trembles*) at Acitrezza in 1948, using local Sicilian-speaking fishermen as actors. It is a very enchanting atmosphere. Optional lunch at a local restaurant. You'll then get back on board and sail back to Riposto, and then transferred to your hotel.

**Friday, May 26      Departure Catania for the U.S.**

Your private driver will be there early for your transfer to the Catania airport. Your flight departs at 7:50 a.m.

**~ ARRIVEDERCI SICILIA! ~**