Tour Catania/Catania
From March 21st to November 7th
departures every Saturday

Day 1 - Saturday: CATANIA (hotel in Catania)
Arrive independently to the hotel in the charming city of Catania (optional private transfer on request). In the evening you will meet our tour-leader and your travel companions and enjoy a welcome dinner. Overnight in hotel.

Day 2 - Sunday: SYRACUSE – NOTO (hotel in Catania)
After breakfast in hotel we will visit Syracuse, the most beautiful and greatest Greek colony in Sicily and World Heritage Site! The visit will start with the Archaeological Park of Neapolis, with its Greek Theatre, the Roman Amphitheatre, the Latomie of Paradise and the Ear of Dionysius. We will continue visiting the splendid Ortigia, a small island which is the historical centre of Syracuse. In Ortigia you will admire the beautiful Cathedral which dominates the square with its authoritative presence. The present façade is a powerful Sicilian-Baroque composition but it gives no hint that this building was once a Doric temple! From Piazza Duomo you will reach a wide terrace on the waterfront surrounding the famous Arethusa’s Fountain, one of the most famous freshwater sources of the Greek world. Free time for lunch. Departure to Noto, the capital of Sicilian Baroque, famous for its fine buildings of the early eighteenth century and declared Unesco World Heritage Site. Inspired by Baroque ideals of “open city”, Noto is a rare masterpiece and the most clear example of theatrical tastes in 18th century architecture whose local limestone has been burnt gold by the sun. Noto’s Baroque is in fact a game of elegant curves, floral weaves, perspective views palaces and gardens, capitals and ornaments that adorn the facades of churches and monasteries. We will visit Palazzo Nicolaci Villadorata, beautiful noble residence in Baroque style and once the residence of Don Giacomo Nicolaci, a patron of the arts. Back to Catania for dinner and overnight in hotel.
**Day 3 - Monday: ETNA – TAORMINA (hotel in Catania)**

This morning we will leave to visit **Etna**, the highest (c. 3350m) volcano in Europe and one of the largest and most active in the world, nowadays Unesco World Heritage Site. Its regional park protects 59,000 hectares of unique geology, flora and fauna, villages and farms, and traditional methods of forestry, bee-keeping, wine manufacture, stonework and carpentry. Views of stunning landscapes will amaze you heading to Rifugio Sapienza. We will reach the “**Crateri Silvestri**”, small volcanic cones now inactive, surrounded by ancient lava flows. The view beyond the mountain’s hundreds of subsidiary cones and craters, can extend across the whole of Sicily, the Aeolian islands and Calabria. The spectacle is unique! Later we will visit a company of beekeeping: **visit of the honey extraction lab, tasting of homemade honey** and typical products of the area. We will proceed to **Taormina**, charming town renowned for its magnificent position above the sea commanding a celebrated view of Etna. Lunch in a lovely restaurant in the city centre, where we will attend to an interesting cooking class for the preparation of typical dishes of the sicilian culinary tradition. In the afternoon we will visit Taormina’s fascinating Greek theatre, and then you will have free time for a nice walk among the picturesque Medieval typical narrow streets, go shopping and looking around the local handicraft (coral jewels, precious laces, ceramics, sweets and much more). The day will end with an overview of the beautiful Riviera dei Ciclopi. Back to our hotel in Catania for dinner and overnight.

**Day 4 - Tuesday: CATANIA – CEFALU’ (hotel in Palermo)**

Today we will visit the historical centre of **Catania** stated Unesco World Heritage Site, with its original Baroque style and its unique streets built with black lava stone. The colour scheme of the city-centre building in fact is black and dark grey, relieved with white limestone details around the doors and windows. The result is extremely elegant. The walking tour will start across the “pescheria” (the ancient fish market) to reach the scenic Duomo square with its magnificent Cathedral and the famous “Liotru” statue, antique lava-stone elephant, symbol of the city. Not far from here we will reach University Square and we will have a walk along the splendid baroque Via dei Crociferi, the most representative 18th century street in Catania, where we will admire the famous S. Benedict Monastery, Unesco World Heritage Site. Before going on along the precious city center, we will stop in a historic bar of the city to taste the typical “granita & brioche”. Free time for lunch. Transfer to **Cefalù**, charming Medieval town situated at the northern coast of Sicily. We will visit its stunning Norman Dome and you will have free time to stroll through the town or to visit the famous and well-known Mandralisca Museum. We will proceed to Palermo for overnight. Dinner at the hotel or in a restaurant nearby.

**Day 5. - Wednesday: MONREALE - PALERMO (hotel in Palermo)**

After breakfast in hotel, the morning will be spent visiting **Monreale**, its huge Norman Cathedral, proclaimed the Eighth Wonder of the World, and its splendid Cloister in Arab-Norman style: admirable masterpiece of art, sculpture, and semi-precious stones marquetry! Later we will discover the stunning **Palermo**, one of the richest towns in the island for its history and art. Palermo stands on a bay at the foot of Mt Pellegrino, a headland described by Goethe as the loveliest he had ever seen. While the Baroque predominates, there is a profusion of different architectural styles reflecting the city’s multicultural past: Punic walls, Art Nouveau villas, noble residences, XVIIth century squares, including an elegant opera house. We will visit the wonderful Arab-Norman Cathedral, the astonishing Martorana Church and the amazing Cappella Palatina, mirable example from an historical and an artistic point of view, of how different cultures, religions and way of thinking apparently incompatible can coexist.
Ruggero II in fact employed both Bizantyne, Muslim and Latin workers. Along the visiting day, we will have a stop for a food surprise in a local bakery. Free time for lunch. Continuing our walk we will admire the Teatro Massimo, the debated fountain in Pretoria Square, situated in the ancient Kalsa area and adorned with XVI century sculptures. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

**Day 6 – Thursday: MARSALA- SALT ROAD - AGRIGENTO (hotel in Agrigento)**
This morning the tour will continue along the charming and well-known town of Marsala, where Garibaldi went ashore in May 1860. Marsala is a Mediterranean modern city, divided between sea and land, featuring unforgettable colors: bright yellow, intense blue, strong red, dazzling white and natural green. It preserves several ruins of Phoenician, Arab and Norman dominations and a wide artistic heritage with sanctuaries and caves, hypogeums, underground roads, necropolis and thermal baths. We will discover the lovely city center and its aristocratic buildings, monuments and imposing Baroque churches. The guided tour of the *Florio Cellars* is a journey that begins in front of the majestic giant vats, built at the end of the 19th century and still used for the refinement of marsala. It continues inside the 3 fascinating barrel chambers, 165 meters long and running beneath 104 arches, under which 1.400 small barrels and about 600 larger barrels and vats of different capacities are arrayed, as c. 5.500.000 litres of Marsala wines age in silence and stillness. After a thirty minute tour through the barrel vaults, where the ancient tuff stone floor has been restored, you reach the avant-garde tasting rooms where we stop for lunch and for a local wine tasting. We will proceed to visit the popular Salt Road. Between Trapani and Marsala, the Salt Road is now protected, in part because of the interesting birdlife, and also as important sites of industrial archaeology; here the salt marshes have given rise to one of the oldest salt-extracting industries in the world. Transfer to *Agrigento* and visit of the Valley of the Temples stated World Heritage Site, where among hundreds of almond trees, the rests of the ancient Akragas rise. It was defined by Pyndar “the most beautiful city of mortals”. Once one of the most prosperous of the ancient Greek cities on the island, Agrigento presents a remarkable series of Doric Temples of the 5th century. You will see the “Temple of Hera”, the “Temple of Concordia” and the “Temple of Heracles”. Accommodation in hotel, dinner and overnight.

**Day 7 - Friday: PIAZZA ARMERINA - RAGUSA IBLA (hotel in Catania)**
Today we will reach *Piazza Armerina* where we will admire the splendid polychrome mosaics of the famous Villa Romana del Casale, World Heritage Site. The complex includes some of the most extensive and most beautiful Roman mosaics known. This majestic villa, belonged to a member of the Roman Senatorial aristocracy, hosts prestigious mosaics representing mythological and historical episodes and scenes of hunting and entertainments. After free time for lunch, departure to *Ragusa Ibla* and visit of its historical centre cradle of Sicilian Baroque, with its Cathedral, situated in the beautiful square of the Dome and the “giardino Ibleo”. Used as a location of the extremely popular Police Inspector Montalbano Tv series, it is today stated among the 44 Italian World Heritage Sites. This little precious ancient city hosts more than 50 churches and many Baroque architectural treasures. We’ll conclude the visiting day with a tasting of local products. Proceed to Catania for dinner and overnight in hotel.

**Day 8 - Saturday: CATANIA**
Breakfast in hotel and end of services.

**RATE PER PERSON** in double room **€ 889,00**
Single room supplement: € 245,00 - 3rd bed reduction: € 50,00
THE RATE INCLUDES:

Multilingual Tour leader and professional travel guide* (English, Italian or Spanish) for the whole tour, from the evening of the 1st day to the evening of the 7th day, local guides or audio-guides where necessary.

Deluxe bus form day 2 to day 7

- Whisper kit
- Accommodation in charming 4 stars hotels mostly located in the city centre, international breakfast included:
  - Catania: Il Principe Hotel 4* / Romano House Hotel 4* or similar
  - Palermo: Mercure Palermo Centro 4* / Ibis Styles Palermo Cristal 4* or similar
  - Agrigento: Baia di Ulisse Wellness &SPA 4* or similar
- 7 dinners in hotels or local restaurants (dinner – 3 main courses fixe menu , beverages not included) to have a taste of Sicilian and Italian cuisine.
- 2 lunches: on day 3 in Taormina with a cooking class and on day 6 in Marsala in the well-known Florio Cellars.
- Visit of the main suggestive Unesco World Heritage Sites: Syracuse, Noto, Etna, Catania city centre, Cefalù, Monreale, Palermo, Agrigento, Piazza Armerina, Ragusa.
- Tasting of Sicilian typical products: Etna (day 3): visit of a beekeeping honey company and honey tasting; Catania (day 4): tasting of Sicilian "granita & brioche"; Palermo (day 5) tasting of local street food; Marsala (day 6): visit of a wine cellar and wine tasting; Ragusa (day 7): tasting of local cheese.
THE RATE DOES NOT INCLUDE:
Transfers in/out - all lunches except for the one on day 3 in Taormina and on day 6 in Marsala - beverages - entrance fees at monuments/museums - city taxes (where compulsory) - tips and extras in general - anything not specified under “The rate includes”

SUPPLEMENTS: - Pre-night/Post-night in hotel in Catania (BB treatment): € 69,00 p.p. in Standard double room per night - € 110,00 in single room standard per night. Transfers from Catania airport to hotel in Catania and vice versa : 1/3 pax € 29,00 each way per car Assistance – Medical Expense Reimbursement – Luggage insurance – Travel Cancellation Expenses Insurance: on request.

PRIVILEGE PACKAGE
€ 280,00 p.p. in double/twin room - €425,00 p.p. in single/Double single use
Includes: Superior/Deluxe Room – Private transfer in/out- City taxes- All entrance fees as per program

*Monolingual departures during high season

Extra fees entrances to be confirmed
- Syracuse Archeological Park € 10,00 p.p.
- Syracuse Cathedral € 2,00 p.p.
- Taormina Greek theatre € 10,00 p.p.
- Monreale Cathedral € 4,00 p.p.
- Monreale Cloister € 6,00 p.p.
- Palermo Cappella Palatina € 12,00 p.p.
- Palermo Martorana Church € 2,00 p.p.
- Agrigento Valle dei Templi € 12,00 p.p.
- Piazza Armerina Villa Romana € 10,00 p.p.

DEPARTURE DATES:
Saturday/Saturday

- March 21...28
- April 04...11...18...25
- May 02...09...16...23...30
- June 06...13...20...27
- July 04...11...18...25
- August 01...08...15...22...29
- September 05...12...19...26
- October 03...10...17...24...31
- November 07

FOR ORGANIZATIONAL REASONS OR DUE TO FORCE MAJEURE THE ITINERARY MAY BE MODIFIED

Arrival or Departure Day :
on request, it is possible to arrange optional HD private excursions to Acireale or Caltagirone

Special GIFT to participants:
a splendid illustrated book about Sicilian culinary tradition with recipes in English

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