

## 2016 Special New Year's departure

Tour Catania/Catania – 8 days / 7 nights in half board

Departure on Monday 26.12

### Day 1. - Monday: CATANIA (hotel in Catania)

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

### Day 2. - Tuesday: CATANIA – TAORMINA (hotel in Catania)

After breakfast, our day will start visiting 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 city still preserves ruins of the Imperial Roman period despite having been rebuilt after the earthquake of 1693. Catania was the capital of the Kingdom of Sicily under the Aragonese dynasty. 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 the University Square and we will have a walk along the splendid baroque Via dei Crociferi, the most representative 18<sup>th</sup> century street in Catania, where we will admire the famous S. Benedict Monastery, Unesco World Heritage Site. We will continue walking along the precious historical city centre. Later on we will proceed to **Taormina**, charming town renowned for its magnificent position above the sea commanding a celebrated view of Etna! Lunch in a nice restaurant where you will assist to a **show-cooking** lesson for some typical Sicilian cuisine dishes. 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 and go shopping and looking around the local handycraft (coral jewels, precious laces, ceramics, sweets and much more). Back to Catania for dinner and overnight in hotel.

### Day 3. – Wednesday: PALERMO – MONREALE (hotel in Palermo)

After breakfast in hotel, we will head towards **Palermo** the capital of Sicily, to visit 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

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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, 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. Continuing our walk we will admire the debated fountain in Pretoria Square, situated in the ancient Kalsa area and adorned with XVI century sculptures. Along the visiting day we will have a stop for a **food surprise** in the famous Antica Focacceria San Francesco. Free time for lunch. Later on we will proceed to **Monreale** to visit 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! Dinner and overnight in hotel.

#### **Day 4. - Thursday: AGRIGENTO (hotel in Agrigento)**

Breakfast in hotel and transfer to **Agrigento** to visit the Archaeological Museum Pietro Griffo and the magnificent 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 Pindar "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 5<sup>th</sup> century. You will see the "Temple of Hera", the "Temple of Concordia" and the "Temple of Heracles". In the afternoon accommodation in hotel, dinner and overnight.

#### **Day 5. – Friday : PIAZZA ARMERINA - CALTAGIRONE (hotel in Catania)**

Proceeding on 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, which has some of the most extensive and most beautiful Roman mosaics known, is a World Heritage Site. 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! . Later we will proceed to **Caltagirone**, famous for the production center of pottery, particularly maiolica and terra-cotta wares. Nowadays the production is more and more oriented to artistic production of ceramics and terra-cotta sculptures. We will finish with the visit of old nativity scene. Dinner and overnight.

#### **Day 6. – Saturday : SIRACUSA - ORTIGIA (hotel in Catania)**

After breakfast in hotel, tour of Sicily starts. We will visit **Siracusa**, the most beautiful and greatest Greek colony in Sicily and World Heritage Site! The visit will start with the **Archaeological Park of**

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**Neapolis**, with its Greek Theatre, the Roman Amphitheatre, the Latomie of Paradise and the Ear of Dionysius. Tour of Sicily continues visiting the splendid **Ortigia**, a small island which is the historical centre of **Siracusa**. 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 fresh-water sources of the Greek world. Free time for lunch. In the afternoon we will back at the hotel. Gala dinner event and overnight.

**Day 7. – Sunday : RIVIERA DEI CICLOPI (Aci Castello – Acitrezza – Acireale ) - ZAFFERANA ETNEA (hotel in Catania)**

Breakfast in hotel and departure in the late morning to discover the charming “**Riviera dei Ciclopi**” evocative name to which they are dedicated some of the most famous Omero's legends. According to the most famous of these legends, the 8 spectacular rocks you can see in Acitrezza, have been thrown by Polyphemus against Ulysses. We will visit **Aci Castello** which takes its name from the Norman castle built in 1076 on the lava rock that runs out into the sea, giving the name to the small village. Proceeding on, we will reach **Aci Trezza**, the fisherman village where Giovanni Verga set his masterpiece "I Malavoglia" and Luchino Visconti, inspired by the novel, shot his movie, masterpiece of Italian neorealism "The Earth Trembles " with his crew and with the collaboration of the inhabitants of the village. Further along the coast we will stop in **Acireale**, known in Roman times as a thermal city. The town was destroyed by the earthquake in 1693, after which it was built as we see it today, with magnificent Baroque buildings and a beautiful central square that make it an interesting destination to be included in a journey in search of the Sicilian baroque. From the garden of the Villa Belvedere, at the north of the city, you have the best view of the town on both the Riviera and Mount Etna. In the afternoon we will proceed to **Zafferana Etnea**, founded in 1387 in the upper part of the Valle del Bove, the point of confluence of the lava streams from Etna's Eastern craters which frequently have destroyed the town, which has always been rebuilt. Zafferana Etnea was threatened by the 1992 volcanic eruption of Mt. Etna. Zafferana, along with Nicolosi, is now regarded as one of the major tourist stopping points for summer and winter expeditions to the summit of Mt. Etna. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

**Day 8. – Monday : CATANIA**

Breakfast in hotel and end of services.

***For organizational reasons or due to force majeure the itinerary may be modified***

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**RATES PER PERSON: € 798,00** in double room

Single room supplement: € 210,00 - 3rd bed reduction: € 30,00

**New Years Eve compulsory supplement (Thursday 31.12): € 115,00 p.p.**

**The supplement includes New Year's Eve dinner (7 main courses menu) in your hotel in Catania, with music and entertainment (Beverages included) – NET RATE NOT COMMISSIONABLE**

**THE RATES INCLUDE:**

- Multilingual Tour leader and professional travel guide (English, Italian, 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.
- Modern and comfortable bus, minibus or minivan for group with less than 15 pax for the whole tour (from the 2nd day to the 7th).
- Accommodation in charming 4 stars hotels mostly located in the city centre of the main Sicilian towns. Half board treatment.
- Visit of the main suggestive Unesco World Heritage Sites: Catania city centre, Palermo, Monreale, Agrigento, Siracusa, Caltagirone, Piazza Armerina.
- Half board basis (dinner – 3 main courses menu to have a taste of Sicilian cuisine) + 1 lunch on day 2 in Taormina - Tasting of Sicilian typical products: Catania (day2): tasting of the typical Sicilian cannolo; Taormina (day 2): lunch and show cooking; Palermo (day 3): tasting of local street food.

**THE RATES DO NOT INCLUDE:**

- Transfers in/out
- All lunches except for the one on day 2 in Taormina
- Beverages
- Entrance fees for monuments/museums
- City taxes (where compulsory)
- Tips and extras in general
- Anything not specified under "The rates include"

**DEPARTURE DATES:**

Monday/Monday

December 26

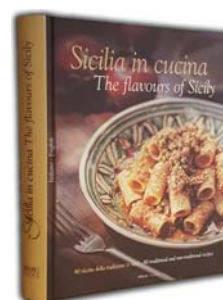
**Extra fees entrances (to be confirmed):**

- ◆ Taormina Greek theatre € 10,00 p.p.
- ◆ Monreale Cathedral € 3,00 p.p.
- ◆ Monreale Cloister € 6,00 p.p.
- ◆ Palermo Cappella Palatina € 8,50 p.p.
- ◆ Palermo Martorana Church € 2,00 p.p.
- ◆ Palermo Cathedral € 3,00 p.p.
- ◆ Siracusa Archeological Park € 10,00 p.p.
- ◆ Siracusa Cathedral € 2,00 p.p.
- ◆ Agrigento Archaeological Museum Pietro Griffo & Valle dei Templi € 13,50 p.p.

*Hotels carefully selected for their location and design to combine Sicilian tradition with comfort*



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Special **GIFT** to participants, a splendid illustrated book about Sicily, its history and its culinary tradition with recipes in English