



Sicily/Malta Discovery Tour with Travel Avidly

11 days in Sicily and 4 days in Malta

May 6th to 20th, 2025

Available to a small group of 12 to 16 travelers **\$3,750 pp double, \$4,490 pp single - plus air**
(Air travel from home to Italy approximately \$1,300 to \$1,500 Fly in to Palermo, Fly out of Catania)

***Sicily** is a fertile, uncommon mix of geology and culture. Volcanic soil from Mt. Etna, a glowing sun.....Pure passion set in wild beauty. Sicilian towns boast many grand sites that will leave you in awe. Cathedrals, historical sights, ruins and lovingly cared for gardens on the countryside. Amazing restaurants, street food and the best pastries. The perfect blend of history, culture and delicious snacks. If you love Italy....Sicily will grab yet another piece of your heart!*

11 days.

6 Days in Palermo and 5 days in Catania

Approximately one hour drive to explore each city from base accommodation.

Stay in less hotels for the comfort of not needing to move every day.

Includes:

4 star accommodations, Transportation, Excursions, museums, short cruise
guided tours by locals and wine tasting

Meals: 2 dinners, 1 lunches w/wine tasting, all breakfast

Travel from Palermo to Catania is a lovely 2 1/2 drive

***Malta** is quite uncommon, a thrilling mix of Italian, Arab, and British influences (Union Jack souvenirs, red telephone booths, left-side driving and all). But as you will learn during your visit this mediterranean archipelago is totally unique, from 16th century palazzos, beautiful shorelines and ruins that predate the Pyramids in Giza. There's a lot to see!*

4 days

Includes:

Round trip air from Sicily, 4 star accommodations, Transportation

Excursions, museums, guided tours by locals and wine tasting, short cruise

Meals: 1 dinner, all breakfast



Group Leader:

Deb Smith 386-562-2213

ITINERARY

Day 1, May 6th, Tuesday: Your journey begins with our departure from Home to Palermo. Enjoy settling into your accommodation.

We have a private guide for our entire time in Palermo



Sicilian Flag

Day 2, May 7th, Wednesday:

Palermo - Today we'll discover Palermo, the capital of Sicily, and tour its Historic City Center. You'll feel an immediate sense of history and culture in the air. Your tour continues at the Quattro Canti, the city's baroque heart, where four grandiose buildings meet at a crossroad, each representing a season, a Spanish king, and a patroness of Palermo. Explore more by walking to the nearby Piazza Pretoria to marvel at the ornate Fountain of Shame, so named for its nude statues. Wander through the bustling Ballarò Market, one of the city's oldest markets, where you can sample local street food like arancini (fried rice balls) and panelle (chickpea fritters). Conclude your day with a visit to the magnificent Palermo Cathedral, a stunning blend of architectural styles from different eras.



Day 3, May 8th, Thursday:

Palermo - Norman Palace and Catacombs Start your day with a visit to the Norman Palace, also known as the Palazzo dei Normanni. This ancient royal palace is a testament to Sicily's rich history, showcasing a mix of Arab, Norman, and Byzantine architectural influences. Inside, you'll find the breathtaking Palatine Chapel, adorned with stunning mosaics that narrate biblical stories.

In the afternoon, venture to the Capuchin Catacombs, an eerie yet fascinating site. Here, you can explore the underground tunnels where thousands of mummified bodies are on display, offering a unique glimpse into the burial practices of Palermo's past. Reflect on the city's complex history as you stroll through this hauntingly beautiful place. There will be free time after catacombs and before dinner.



Norman Palace



Palatine Chapel

Day 4, May 9th, Friday:

Palermo - Monreale Cathedral and Cloister Today's excursion takes you just outside Palermo to Monreale, home to one of Sicily's most impressive architectural wonders. The Monreale Cathedral is renowned for its extensive and intricate mosaics depicting biblical scenes, covering over 6,000 square meters. As you step inside, let your eyes wander across the golden walls and ceiling, absorbing the artistry and craftsmanship. After exploring the cathedral, make your way to the adjacent cloister. This serene space features a lush garden surrounded by archways, each supported by beautifully carved columns. Take some time to wander through the cloister, admiring the detailed stonework and enjoying the peaceful ambiance before returning to Palermo.

Day 5, May 10th, Saturday:

Palermo - Trapani and Erice

Start your day early in Palermo and take a scenic drive to Trapani. Begin with a traditional Sicilian breakfast at a local café along the Via Garibaldi promenade, enjoying the serene sea views. Explore Trapani's historic center, visiting the Church of Sant'Agostino and the Cattedrale di San Lorenzo, before heading to the picturesque salt pans of Saline di Trapani e Paceco. Here, you can learn about traditional salt extraction methods and possibly spot some flamingos. Around midday, take the cable car to the hilltop town of Erice, savoring the breathtaking panoramic views during the ascent.

Upon arriving in Erice, enjoy a leisurely lunch at a local trattoria, sampling traditional Sicilian dishes with stunning views of the valley and coastline. Spend the afternoon exploring the medieval town, including the Castello di Venere and the Giardino del Balio. As the day winds down, return to Trapani by cable car and relish a seafood dinner at a seaside restaurant. Conclude your evening with a stroll along the Lungomare Dante

Alghieri and a delicious gelato before heading back to Palermo, reflecting on a day rich with Sicily's coastal beauty, historic charm, and culinary delights.



Trapani salt pans

Day 6, May 11th, Sunday:

Palermo - Segeste, Zingaro Reserve, and Scopello

Begin your day with an early drive from Palermo to Segesta, a site steeped in ancient history. Upon arrival, explore the well-preserved Greek temple, renowned for its impressive Doric columns and serene setting amidst rolling hills. Don't miss the ancient theater perched high on Monte Barbaro, offering breathtaking views of the surrounding countryside and the distant sea. The morning light enhances the beauty of these ancient ruins, making it an ideal time for photography and reflection on the rich history of this archaeological site.

Continue your journey to the Zingaro Nature Reserve, a pristine stretch of coastline that boasts crystal-clear waters, rugged cliffs, and diverse flora and fauna. Spend your afternoon hiking along the scenic trails, enjoying the unspoiled natural beauty and stopping at secluded coves. Afterward, head to the nearby village of Scopello, famous for its picturesque tonnara (tuna fishery) and striking rock formations. Enjoy a leisurely lunch at a local trattoria, savoring fresh seafood dishes while overlooking the turquoise sea. Conclude your day with a relaxing drive back to Palermo, enriched by the natural and historical wonders experienced throughout your trip.

We have a private guide for our entire time in Catania

Day 7, May 12th, Monday:

Transfer from Palermo to Catania You'll transfer from Palermo to Catania and stop at a fun spot for lunch in the middle. Catania is a vibrant city located at the foot of Mount Etna. Upon arrival, embark on a guided tour of Catania's historic center. Visit the bustling Piazza del Duomo, home to the stunning Catania Cathedral and the iconic Fontana dell'Elefante, a symbol of the city.

Spend your afternoon enjoying some free time. Stroll along Via Etnea, the city's main street, lined with shops, cafes, and Baroque architecture. Perhaps visit the lively fish market, where you can soak in the local atmosphere and sample some fresh seafood. End your day with a relaxing evening, perhaps dining at a local trattoria.



Catania

Day 8, May 13th, Tuesday:

Catania – Drive to Taormina, Greek Theatre and Isola Bella Take a day trip to Taormina, a picturesque town perched on a cliff overlooking the Ionian Sea. Begin your exploration at the ancient Greek Theatre, which offers not only a glimpse into the past but also breathtaking views of Mount Etna and the coastline. The theatre, still used today for performances, is a testament to the area's rich cultural heritage.

In the afternoon, head to Isola Bella, a small island connected to the mainland by a narrow strip of sand. This beautiful nature reserve is perfect for a leisurely walk or a swim in the clear waters. Relax on the pebble beach and take in the stunning scenery before heading back to Catania. If you want to forgo Isola Bella, you may have free time to shop and stay in Taromina.

Day 9, May 14th, Wednesday:

Catania - Mt. Etna Tour & Barone di Villagrande Winery Today, embark on an unforgettable adventure to Mount Etna, Europe's highest and most active volcano. A guided tour will take you through the volcanic landscape, where you can explore craters, lava fields, and unique geological formations. Depending on the activity level of the volcano, you may even witness some minor eruptions or fumaroles.

After your volcano tour, visit the Barone di Villagrande Winery on the slopes of Etna. Enjoy a tour of the vineyard and wine cellars, followed by a tasting of their exquisite wines. Pair your wine tasting with a delicious lunch featuring local produce, all while taking in the stunning views of the surrounding vineyards and the volcano.



Taormina and Mt. Etna

Day 10, May 15th, Thursday:

Catania - Syracuse & Ortigia Archeological Tour Travel to Syracuse today, a city steeped in history and culture. Begin with a visit to the Neapolis Archaeological Park, home to the impressive Greek Theatre, the Roman Amphitheatre, and the Ear of Dionysius, a limestone cave with incredible acoustics. Wander through these ancient ruins, imagining the lives of those who once lived and performed here. In the afternoon, explore the island of Ortigia, the historic heart of Syracuse. Stroll through its narrow streets, visit the stunning Syracuse Cathedral, which incorporates the remains of an ancient temple, and relax at one of the many charming cafes. As the sun sets, enjoy the beautiful views over the harbor and the Mediterranean Sea.

We have a private guide for our entire time in Malta

Day 11, May 16th, Friday:

Fly to Malta - City Tour of Valletta This morning, catch a flight from Catania to Malta. Upon arrival, you'll begin a guided tour of Valletta, Malta's capital and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Start at the Upper Barrakka Gardens, offering panoramic views of the Grand Harbour. Visit St. John's Co-Cathedral, known for its opulent interior and Caravaggio's masterpiece, "The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist." Continue your tour through Valletta's charming streets, admiring the Baroque architecture and historic buildings. Stop by the Grand Master's Palace, which now houses the President's office and a museum. Enjoy some free time in the afternoon to explore further or relax in one of the city's many cafes.



Malta flag



Day 12, May 17th, Saturday:

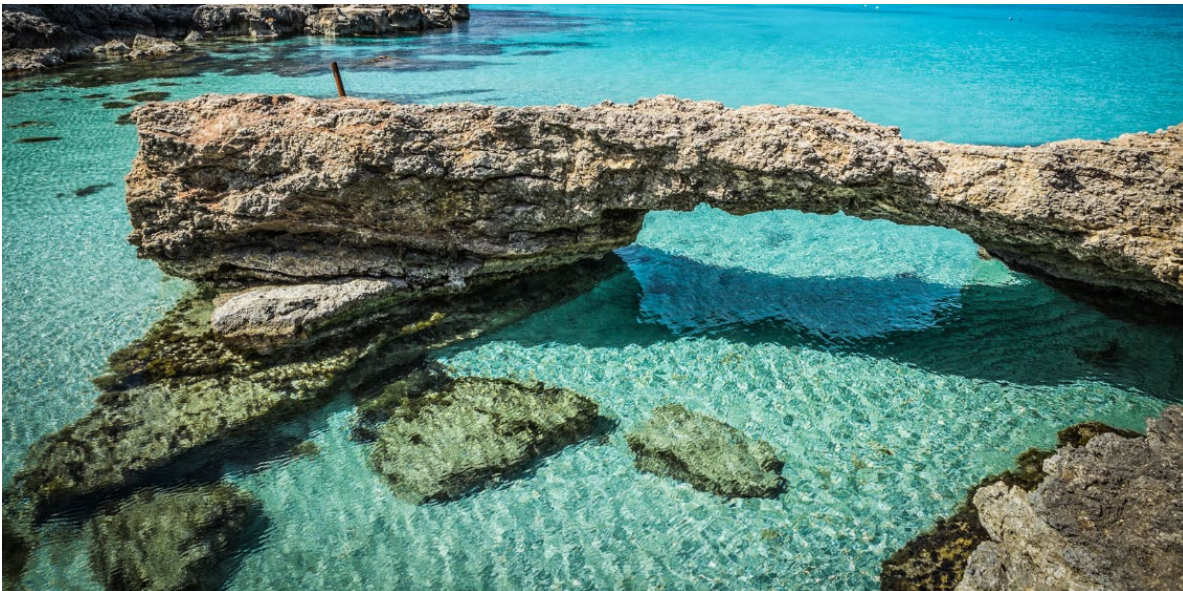
Malta - Mdina & Rabat City Tours Today, journey to Mdina, the ancient capital of Malta, known as the "Silent City." Wander through its narrow, winding streets, lined with medieval and Baroque buildings. Visit St. Paul's Cathedral and its museum, then take in the panoramic views from the city's fortified walls.

Next, head to the neighboring town of Rabat. Explore the St. Paul's Catacombs, an extensive underground burial site dating back to Roman times. Visit the Wignacourt Museum and Casa Bernard, a 16th-century noble house, for a glimpse into Malta's rich history and culture. End your day with a leisurely stroll through Rabat's charming streets and squares.

Day 13, May 18th, Sunday:

Malta - Hagar Qim Temples and Blue Lagoon Cruise Begin your day with a visit to the Hagar Qim Temples, one of Malta's most significant prehistoric sites, located on a hilltop overlooking the sea. These megalithic structures, dating back to around 3600-3200 BC, offer a fascinating glimpse into the island's ancient past. Start at the visitor center to watch an informative audiovisual presentation that provides context about the temples and their historical significance. Then, take your time exploring the well- preserved ruins, marveling at the massive stones and intricate carvings that have stood the test of time.

After lunch, we will head to the harbor for a relaxing afternoon cruise to the Blue Lagoon on Comino Island. Board a comfortable boat and set sail across the crystal-clear waters of the Mediterranean. As we approach the Blue Lagoon, you'll be captivated by its stunning turquoise hues and pristine beauty. Visit Ghajn Tuffieha Bay, Popeye Village and Mallieha along the way. Spend the rest of the afternoon basking in the natural beauty of the Blue Lagoon before cruising back to the mainland, completing a perfect blend of cultural discovery and seaside relaxation.



Malta, Blue Lagoon

Day 14, May 19th, Monday:

Malta - Free Day to Spend in Valletta Today is yours to explore Valletta at your own pace. Revisit your favorite spots or discover new ones. You might choose to explore the National Museum of Archaeology, which houses artifacts from Malta's prehistoric periods.

Day 15, May 20th, Tuesday:

Fly from Malta to Catania and then home. Depending on air, we may change this to fly out of Palermo. TBD

WHERE YOU'LL BE STAYING

Palermo for 6 Days: Villa del Gattopardo Suites & Spa - 4-star

Villa del Gattopardo was born at the dawn of the 18th century as a summer residence thanks to its exceptional location, in the "Piana dei Colli", the heart of the Conca d'oro, has returned to its former glory after conservative restorations. In keeping with Sicilian hospitality of the time: the internal flooring of the Villa, the wonderful coffered ceilings and the sumptuous frescoes by Fumagalli entirely decorate the walls of the house. The large courtyard offers immediate access to the hotel reception and the Spa, a wellness corner always available to guests with a wide range of treatments.

The garden surrounding the Villa is a true paradise of mediterranean vegetation, a triumph of smells and colors: orange, mandarin, lemon, olive, jasmine and orange blossom trees will inebriate your senses, leaving you stunned by the beauty of the Sicilian nature. In a corner of the park, stands the "Scents Garden", a space dedicated to the spicy scents of the land of Sicily.



Catania for 5 Days: Katane Palace Hotel - 4-star

In the heart of the historic center of Catania, in one of the most fascinating cities in Sicily, halfway between the sea and Etna, is the Katane Palace Hotel . A stone's throw from the eighteenth-century and baroque Via Umberto and Via Etnea considered the "living room of Catania". The environments enriched by the use of wood, marble, fine fabrics and antique furniture, create the right mix of elegance and refinement.



Malta for 4 days: Waterfront Hotel – 4 star

Everything Malta has to offer every time you step out of the door, Waterfront Hotel is soaked by the luxurious sun. Surrounded by the Mediterranean and rich in culture, your island destination awaits. There are a few places in the world where you get to enjoy vibrant city life, right on the water's edge and where such a buzz and energy meets the clear calm blue Mediterranean Sea. Waterfront Hotels interior style has a sleek modern design full of Maltese islandish character.

