

Sicily and Malta

two islands under the same sun

This tour takes you to the southern islands of the Mediterranean sea, to discover their unique cultures. When you think of Italy, you probably think mostly of Roman ruins, but Sicily is a real melting pot of cultures. Over the centuries, the island was colonized by the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Muslims, Normans, Spanish and the Bourbon Kingdom, before becoming Italian. You can still find the traces left behind: Greeks and Romans ruins together with Byzantine and Arab art all at once! The Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, the Romans and the Byzantines, all left their sites also on the Maltese Islands, which was actually an extension of Sicily till 1530: the conquerors in fact also governed the Maltese Islands till Charles V bequeathed Malta to the Knights, taking Malta through a new golden age. The history of Malta is a long and colourful one dating back to the dawn of civilisation, the remains of which are the mysterious temples dedicated to the goddess of fertility.

Tour includes

Bus at disposal for the whole tour (on Sicily and then on Malta)
2 nights B&B 3* /4* hotel in Palermo
Full day guide Palermo and Monreale
Full day guide Erice and Selinunte
Marzipan tasting in Erice
1 night B&B 3* /4* hotel in Agrigento
Half day guide Tempel valley in Agrigento
2 nights B&B 3* /4* hotel in the area of Giardini Naxos-Letojanni-Roccalumera
Full day guided tour Etna and Taormina
Honey tasting in Zafferana Etnea
Full day guided tour of Catania and Siracusa
1 night B&B 3* /4* hotel in Modica-Pozzallo area
1 Ferry tickets Pozzallo-Malta
Half day guide Valletta
3 nights B&B 4* in Malta
Full day guide Gozo Island
1 Round ferry tickets Malta-Gozo
Full day guide Mdina

**Package price per person, 10 days
from € 739,00**



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Program

Day 1

Arrival in Palermo airport and transfer to hotel for check-in, dinner at leisure.

Day 2

After breakfast we visit **Palermo**, a history and art-packed city with its Cathedral and the Palazzo dei Normanni in which the precious Cappella Palatina is found. The art heritage and traditions of Palermo date back to ancient times. Dominated by different and contrasting cultures, the town and the region as a whole were a melting pot of cultures and the famous Cappella Palatina offers finest examples of oriental-style mosaics. In the afternoon we head to **Monreale** with its impressive Arab-Norman cathedral and an astonishing Benedictine cloister with 228 decorated double columns.

Day 3

Breakfast and departure to explore the province of Trapani. **Erice**, founded in the 9th century, is a charming location with beautiful views and has a medieval core which has been preserved intact. From here we enjoy a breathtaking view of Trapani, the Egadi Islands and the inland countryside. While strolling around the city, we will sample its famous marzipan in a local pastry shop. Later we continue to **Segesta**, with the ancient theatre, the only building enclosed by city walls where historical remains are still visible, and the temple. Then we head to Agrigento for overnight. B&B.

Day 4

After breakfast, a local guide will take you to discover "The Valley of the Temples" of **Agrigento**, an archaeological site which is one of the best examples of classic Greek civilization; it has been named a "World Heritage Site" by UNESCO. The most famous temple, the Temple of Concord, is the best-preserved building of the whole Magna Grecia. The trip resumes towards the eastern part of the island, reaching the area of Giardini Naxos-Letojanni-Roccalumera for check in at the hotel. 2 nights on B&B.



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Day 5

Today you head out for Mount **Etna**, a 3340m high volcano that provides wonderful and fascinating view at all times, particularly in winter with its snow capped crater. The volcano is still active and along the 2000 metre journey you can admire a contrast-filled landscape with lava flows, brooms, chestnut trees, and vineyards. Afterwards in Zafferana Etnea a delicious sampling of honey-based-products is planned. Then you spend the rest of the day in the charming town of **Taormina**: old town boasts amazingly scenic views, especially from the ancient Theatre, the narrow picturesque streets, elegant boutique and craft shops.

Return to the hotel.

Day 6

Breakfast, check-out and departure for **Catania**. The old town is one of eastern Sicily's baroque jewels with the splendid Piazza Duomo and the Via dei Crociferi with its churches and convents. A visit to the fish market (every morning except Sundays) is a must-see. We head to **Syracuse**, the "finest and largest of all Greek cities" according to Cicero, to admire its splendid Greek theatre and the old town on the island of Ortigia. Not to miss are the Temple of Apollo and the Temple of Athena - the latter converted into a church by early christians and today cathedral of Syracuse, where remains of Greek architecture are still clearly visible.

Continue to the hotel in the southern part of Sicily. 1 night on B&B.

Day 7

Early departure (according to ferry schedule) to bid farewell to magical Sicily and say "Hello" to Malta. First step is to visit the capital city - **Valletta** - which is rich in history and monuments. This excursion will allow you to discover the Upper Barrakka Gardens that dominate the Grand Harbour, St. John's co-cathedral, the cathedral museum as well as the oratory to view the famous Caravaggio masterpiece.

Check-in at the hotel. 3 nights on B&B.



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Day 8

In the morning, departure by coach towards Marfa to take the 30-minute-ferry for Mgarr, the main port of Gozo. You will have thus the occasion to pass by another island of the Maltese archipelago, **Comino** (1800 metres in length) on which only about ten people live. After arriving in **Gozo**, we will head for Dwejra Bay, an impressive natural site that includes the Fungus Rock, a huge cylindrical rock isolated at the entrance of the bay, an inland sea that links to the open sea through a natural opening. We will then move onto Rabat to visit its citadel and learn about history and traditions of the island. We then proceed towards Xlendi, one of Gozo's typical and picturesque fishing villages with a final stop at the Megalithic Temples of Ggantija: an impressive pre-historic monument.

Day 9

Today our first stop is **Medina**, the heart of the island, also known as the Silent City. The old capital is a true city-museum, entirely encircled with bastions set on a rocky outcrop, and a maze of alleys lined with patricians residences, baroque churches, convents and palaces. The next stop is the Ta' Qali crafts village allowing you to see local artisans at work developing typical objects (lace, weaving, silver filigree and blown glass) and where the potters will disclose their secrets. The excursion will continue with a visit to the botanical gardens of San Anton, then to **Mosta**, with its famous parish church of the Assumption, a neo-classic building whose 67m high dome is one of the biggest in Europe.

Day 10

After breakfast transfer to Malta Airport.



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