

CLASSIC SICILY



ITINERARY:

Our **7 nights/8 days Sicily trip** starts and ends at Catania Airport and covers the South East of the island, quite simply the richest area in terms of classical sites and C18th Sicilian Baroque. This trip boasts lovely accommodation and we have an emphasis on some of Sicily's great culinary and winemaking traditions. We visit the major sites led by excellent local guides, all qualified archeologists and historians.

Day 1

After a morning meeting at Catania Airport we travel 1hr to Enna, at the very centre of the island. Perched 1,000m above sea level, on a sandstone outcrop, this site has been strategically important since antiquity. We stay **1 night** at a very comfortable B&B. Stroll to visit the C13th Castello di Lombardia, Sicily's largest, the Rock of Ceres and the eclectic Duomo.

Day 2

We depart at 08:00h to be at Piazza Armerina by 09:00h to visit Villa del Casale, a UNESCO WHS. The late Roman villa is the largest single Roman mosaic site in the world: 3,500 square metres of mosaics! Later we continue to Agrigento, taking lunch on the coast in San Leone. We then check in

at Baglio della Luna for **2 nights**, an erstwhile agricultural estate with views over the archeological site. At 15:30h we meet our guide (Qualified archeologist) to visit the extensive C6th BC site of Agrakas, also known as the Valley of the Temples, a UNESCO WHS. Dinner at the hotel, overlooking the illuminated temples.

Day 3

We drive 1hr 15 mins to the wonderfully rural Selinunte, where we spend the morning wondering this extensive classical site (Greek and later Carthaginian) on foot. The spring wild flowers are a real highlight of the locality. Lunch at a nearby restaurant overlooking the sea. Return to Agrigento and later (After the crowds have gone) optional visit of the superb archeological museum.



Day 4

Morning departure for Syracuse. This is the longest drive of the trip (3.5h total). We break it up by exploring Ragusa Ibla on foot and having lunch there. Later we also stop in Noto for a stroll and a renowned granita. Both towns are best examples of 'Sicilian Baroque' and UNESCO WHS. In Syracuse we stay on the island of Ortygia for **2 nights**, at Hotel Gutkowski, intimate and overlooking the sea. Dinner out.

Day 5

We spend the day in Syracuse, starting with the Neapolis archeological site, with its huge altar dedicated to Zeus, the Greek Theatre, the Latomie (Limestone quarries where the Athenian sailors were enslaved following their defeat in 415 BC) and the Roman amphitheatre. Then on to visit the impressive C4th AD Catacombs of St Giovanni and the Paolo Orsi Museum, housing one of the world's foremost Greek collections. Lunch and back at our hotel for siesta or a swim.

Afternoon stroll in the heart of the Ortygia quarter, chance to visit of the cathedral and to go off by oneself. Dinner at Ristorante Don Camillo, a shrine to Sicilian culinary tradition.

Day 6

We have a leisurely morning before heading for Ortygia's bustling and colourful food market, where you have time to purchase some delicacies to take home. Time permitting we can also view Caravaggio's 'Burial of St Lucy' in the nearby St Lucia al Sepolcro church. We then depart for Etna's lower slopes and the Cavanera Etnea winery, near Castiglione di Sicilia, where we lodge for **2 nights**. This lovely luxury agriturismo is owned by Firriato, one of Sicily's best known quality wine producers. Possible late afternoon stroll around the vineyards or swim in the pool.

Day 7

Today, weather permitting, we drive up to Piano della Provenzana, at an altitude of 1,800m on Etna's NE flank (UNESCO WHS), and the site of the 2005/6 eruption. We walk 2h from Monte Sartorius, through mature conifer and silver birch woods, to Ristorante Monte Conca where we have lunch. Return to Cavanera mid afternoon.

Day 8

Group transfer to Catania Airport