

CULTURE + WALKING

SICILY

Agrigento, Taormina & Aeolian Islands



Classic
JOURNEYS

DAILY ITINERARY

SICILY | AGRIGENTO, TAORMINA & AEOLIAN ISLANDS | CULTURE + WALKING



“Classic Journeys provides unbeatable access to experiences around the globe.”

— *Travel + Leisure*

Rustic Island in the Sun

In more ways than one, Sicily is the ultimate Italy. Geographically, it's the southernmost province—warm, golden, and sprinkled with blindingly white Greek temples that are among the world's best preserved. And culturally it's more like Italy as we'd have imagined it a hundred years ago. Farmers still get to market by donkey. Mt. Etna is active even today and is the backdrop to almost every view. Even the bread is rougher and crustier—better to match vibrant food unlike any other you'll find in Italy. We've scouted a remarkably scenic circuit that captures the spirit of Sicily. There's Palermo, of course...and the rock-clinging seaside beauty of Taormina. From beautifully sited lodgings, we set out on walks among the temples of Agrigento and immerse ourselves in the archeology of Siracusa. Offshore, we wander the jewel-like Aeolian Islands. And we're inclined to agree with the poet who wrote: "To have seen Italy without seeing Sicily is not to have seen Italy at all."

DAY 1

MONREALE / PALERMO

- Visit to historical Monreale and Palermo
- Festive welcome dinner

We meet in sunny Palermo at our hotel, located in the city center. From here, we take a short drive to Monreale, a beautiful little hill town that overlooks the Conca d'Oro and best known for its magnificent Norman cathedral. Built by William II in 1174, its interior glows with 130 murals and mosaics depicting scenes from the old and new testaments. Monreale also offers a Romanesque cloister laced with intricate arches and mosaic-inlaid columns that represent one of the richest collection of Sicilian medieval sculpture.

Later in the afternoon, we explore Palermo's historical center, including the colorful piazzas and courtyards. After, we return to our hotel to relax before our festive welcome dinner that offers amazing traditional Sicilian specialties.

OVERNIGHT: PALERMO
MEALS: D

DAY 2

REGALEALI / AGRIGENTO

- Cooking instruction
- Countryside walk
- Temples at night

As we travel into the heart of Sicily, we stop at a farm near the Regaleali area, known for its excellent wine. We'll visit a personal friend, who takes us into his kitchen for a special treat—an opportunity to taste some of the local wine and enjoy a cooking instruction. Satiated from our wonderful lunch, we enjoy a spectacular walk through the rolling countryside surrounding our hosts' home.

After lunch, we drive to Agrigento. Here, the Valle dei Templi (Valley of the Temples) is located on a plateau outside of town. Our hotel, an 18th century villa, is the only lodging located inside the archeological zone. A beautiful benefit of staying at the villa is the opportunity (weather permitting) to dine al fresco on the terrace while the temples are illuminated against the night sky on the hill above us.

OVERNIGHT: AGRIGENTO
MEALS: B, L, D

DAY 3

AGRIGENTO

- Walk and exploration of the Valley of the Temples
- Countryside walk near the blue Mediterranean Sea

Wake up this morning to the magnificent sight of the Temple of Concordia, the best preserved Greek temple in Italy. (If you're an early riser, watch the light of the morning sun bathe the temples in a golden glow.) Following breakfast we explore with our guide among the temples, before we enjoy a visit to the archeological museum, with many of the vases and artifacts from the site. At the temples, roam on your own or with our guide, moving from temple to temple: Concordia (dating to 440 BC), Hercules, Dioscuri, Jupiter, Castor and Pollux. The backdrop to the temples is the sea in the distance, with footpaths through the wildflowers and almond trees in the surrounding fields.

After lunch, we enjoy an afternoon walk through the woods and along the Mediterranean Sea in a protected area that will surprise you with its calm and unique beauty.

Later we return to our hotel to relax before dinner.

OVERNIGHT: AGRIGENTO
MEALS: B, D

DAY 4

SIRACUSA / TAORMINA

- Exploration of Siracusa's island of Ortygia and its archaeological sites
- Check into our hotel with panoramic views of the bay

Leaving behind the ancient ruins, we have the chance to admire the everchanging colors of the Sicilian countryside, driving past rolling hills, vineyards, orange groves and wheat fields, seeing Mt. Etna for the first time in the distance. We then reach the southeastern part of the island and the coastal town of Siracusa (Syracuse). Greek colonists first put down roots here in 734 BC. A mere 300 years later, the city was so powerful that it defeated Athens in a legendary naval battle. Today, Siracusa is rich with well-preserved Greek and Roman landmarks.

On arrival, we explore the ancient heart of the city located on the small island of Ortygia, a UNESCO World Heritage site. After lunch, we visit the archaeological park, including ancient side-by-side theaters. The Greek theater could seat up to 15,000 spectators. The Roman amphitheater was the frequent scene of gladiator battles. On a walk, we'll wander into both of them, as well as the old limestone quarries that are now filled with lemon and orange trees.

In the afternoon, we drive north to Taormina. Famous like Positano on the Amalfi coast for its beautiful location along the cliffs and overlooking the Ionian Sea, Taormina is equally charming, with its elegant boutiques and antique shops.

We arrive at our hotel in Taormina, perched on a hill and offering wide views of the sea. Relax at leisure before another excellent dinner.

OVERNIGHT: TAORMINA
MEALS: B, D

DAY 5

AEOLIAN ISLANDS

- Exploration of the Aeolian Islands seaside and countryside
- Wander quiet lanes in the village of Lipari

This morning we board the aliscafo (hydrofoil) for a beautiful one-hour ride from the port of Milazzo to the largest of the Aeolian Islands—Lipari. As we approach the island, your first impression may be that we are arriving in Greece, as whitewashed houses are scattered along the jagged green hills dropping to the beautiful sea. The Aeolians are seven volcanic, cone-shaped islands, creating a spectacular archipelago in the sea just to the north of Sicily.

Arriving on Lipari, explore the town of Lipari—the largest settlement on the island—with its twisting lanes, quaint boutiques and outdoor cafes, and visit the archeological museum and the massive 16th century castle that dominates the town. After lunch, ride with your guide to the Geophysical Observatory, where scientists keep a record of

DAILY ITINERARY

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all volcanic activity in the area and literally stare into the mouth of the active volcano on Lipari's sister island. Later, stretch your legs on a guided walk along the coastal paths and through olive tree plantations, vineyards and small hamlets back to the port.

The inhabitants of Lipari and its sister islands—Panarea, Stromboli, Salina, Vulcano—are all extremely friendly. We remember fondly one occasion when we stopped midday in a seaside trattoria only to find that while it was not open for lunch, the friendly owner was happy to prepare sandwiches in freshly baked rolls—accompanied by the family's young wine, served in a terra cotta jug.

OVERNIGHT: TAORMINA
MEALS: B

DAY 6

MT. ETNA

- Mt. Etna walk on the massive, recent lava flows
- Savor a rustic lunch of goat cheese, sun-dried tomatoes, and home-made pastas, accompanied by the excellent red Etna wine
- Exploration of Taormina

This morning, we'll drive a short distance to Mt. Etna, one of the world's major active volcanoes and, at 10,958 feet, the highest in Europe. From an altitude of about 7,000 feet, set out on an energetic walk on a scenic pathway over and along lava rivers that provide us the opportunity to see firsthand incredible volcanic formations created over the last several centuries.

Midday we are greeted with a rustic lunch of goat cheese, bruschetta, sun-dried tomatoes, Italian sausages, lamb and home-made pastas, accompanied by the excellent red Etna wine. Following lunch, we head back through the charming

village of Linguaglossa—in the winter a busy ski resort—before we return to our hotel.

In the afternoon, explore Taormina on your own and rummage around the Borgo Medievale (the oldest and most colorful part of town) that allows us to see what everyone from the ancient Greeks to DH Lawrence and Goethe have seen in its spectacular location. Visit the third-century Greek theater set so that looking from the rows of seats your panorama includes the blue sea beyond. Or, visit the Public Gardens, with its exotic flowers and eccentric follies.

If you'd like to relax at the hotel, you might lounge by the pool on the spectacular terrace overlooking the sea. Tonight we enjoy a festive farewell dinner.

OVERNIGHT: TAORMINA
MEALS: B, L, D

DAY 7

TAORMINA / CATANIA

- Leisurely morning in Taormina
- Late morning transfer to Catania airport

This morning is at leisure to relax, swim and explore the quaint streets of the colorful town with bougainvillea laced along the medieval buildings.

Late morning, we drive to Catania and its international airport for flights back to mainland Italy.

MEALS: B



Tour Hotels



Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa

Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa, in the city center, is located in an ideal position to explore Palermo. In the heart of the historical center, easily reachable both the main monuments as well as the airport of Palermo. The perfect hotel for a holiday in Sicily

OVERNIGHT: PALERMO | NIGHTS: 1



Villa Athena

Located in the Valley of the Temples, this 5-star hotel is an 18th-century villa, the only lodging inside the archaeological zone. The villa offers the opportunity to dine al fresco while the temples are illuminated against the night sky.

OVERNIGHT: AGRIGENTO | NIGHTS: 2



Grand Hotel San Pietro

A 5-star luxury property, this beautiful and elegant hotel nestles into its own quiet park near the heart of Taormina. The sea views from the balcony of your room and the glamorous swimming pool are nothing short of spectacular.

OVERNIGHT: TAORMINA | NIGHTS: 3

Tour Dates & Prices

Tour Dates	Price per Person	Price per Person
	Double Occupancy	Single Occupancy
April 11-17, 2021	\$4,995	\$5,890
May 9-15, 2021	\$5,095	\$5,990
June 13-19, 2021	\$5,395	\$6,290
September 12-18, 2021	\$5,395	\$6,290
October 10-16, 2021	\$5,295	\$6,190
April 10-16, 2022	\$5,095	\$5,990
May 8-14, 2022	\$5,195	\$6,090
June 12-18, 2022	\$5,495	\$6,390
September 11-17, 2022	\$5,495	\$6,390
October 9-15, 2022	\$5,395	\$6,290

Want a different date? Or your own date? Visit CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/PRIVATE to learn more about private journeys.

Trip Essentials

TRIP LENGTH: 7 Days, 6 Nights

START: 2:30 PM Lobby of first night hotel, Palermo, Sicily

END: 1:30 PM Airport, Catania, Sicily Late morning transfer to the Catania airport

TERRAIN: Easy to moderate on good trails and coastal paths. An average of 2 to 3 hours of walking per day, with a mini-van usually in support. Walks around Mt. Etna are moderate and involve some elevation gains and losses over loose lava rocks and gravel.

What's Included

- Memorable accommodations for 6 nights
- All breakfasts, 2 lunches (1 cooking instruction), 5 dinners
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to tastings, historic sites and other scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

Above & Beyond Benefits

- **Privileged Access Events**
- **Invisible Check-In**
- **Perfect Pairings Dinners**
- **Wine on Us**

READY TO BOOK?
CLICK TO MAKE A RESERVATION

Or give us a call

1-833-387-1210

Mon-Fri 8:00AM – 5:00PM PST

moreinfo@classicjourneys.com

Travel for Free

Your trip is free when you organize a Classic Journeys trip with 10 or more travelers (including you)! Or you can share your savings with other group members.

TRAVEL WORRY-FREE!

It's easy with insurance from Travel Guard. Your policy can cover trip cancellation, travel delays, lost luggage, medical emergencies, and more. If you are traveling with kids, add them to your policy at no extra cost. [Click here](#) or call 800-826-4919 for details.

AMBASSADOR CLUB

As a Classic Journeys guest, you are invited to join the Ambassador Club after your first Classic Journeys tour. As a member, you'll have access to a [whole suite of Ambassador benefits](#) you can use immediately and as often as you like.

ENJOY THE UNEXPECTED

When you travel with Classic Journeys, you can expect handcrafted surprises built into every trip, but some things just can't be anticipated. Unusual weather, a once-a-year festival or an unscheduled site closing will inspire us and your local guide to improvise and modify this itinerary. Likewise, the hotels named here are used on the majority of our trips, but occasionally one of them can't accommodate us. If that happens, you can count on us to let you know before departure and make sure you're in a hotel of equal or better quality. It's our goal to make your trip exceptional!

**Any discount offered cannot be combined with other offers, and only applies to published (regularly scheduled public) departure dates in our catalogs or on our website.

THE Classic Journeys Difference

HANDCRAFTING TRIPS OF A LIFETIME.



At the end of the day, we fundamentally believe that every guest on every departure of every trip should have a trip of a lifetime. We're fortunate to play the role of well-connected friend, linking our guests with amazing guides, artisans, winemakers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, naturalists, and too many others to list here.

That's what motivates me and our team — in our La Jolla HQ and around the world — every day. Join Us!

President & Founder



You can expect the highest standards:



Luxurious Lodgings:

Ours include coveted properties that appear in "World's Best" and "Gold List" rankings.



Included Activities:

You'll never be surprised with add-on fees on your activities that include snorkeling to cooking lessons.



Local Guides:

Your guides are locals who are always at your side like well-connected friends.



Small Group Travel:

With an average of just 10-12 guests, it's a small footprint that guarantees you access that's off-limits to larger groups.



Amazing Cuisine:

From Michelin-starred restaurants to lunch in a farmhouse kitchen, you'll have a seat for the region's signature dishes.



Unmatched Value:

"Excellent value" and "unbeatable access" are two of the reasons that Travel + Leisure has consistently voted us a World's Best Tour Operator.

You'll enjoy these handcrafted travel experiences in Sicily...

- Luxuriating in 5-star hotels throughout the week, including three nights in Taormina, a perfect base for exploring the Aeolian Islands
- Dining al fresco at Villa Athena, your 18th-century villa-hotel inside the archeological zone of the Valley of the Temples
- Joining a local friend for a Siciliano cooking lesson in their home
- Exploring with expert local guides who love to get you away from the "touristic" Sicily and into the real soul of the island
- Walking scenic paths through meadows and olive groves

"I have visited Italy 3 times prior to this tour. This was by far my best trip to Italy. Our guide played a major role in making this trip so enjoyable. I didn't feel like a tourist, it was more like visiting a friend who lived there."

—Vincent C., Buckeye, AZ

Let's Go!

TO RESERVE: 833.493.5038 | CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/RESERVATIONS

You might also enjoy...



Amalfi Coast

Positano & the Isle of Capri

Culture + Walking

PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Wandering the ruins of legendary Pompeii
- Enjoying incredible hotels in Positano and Capri
- Walking seaside trails past magnificent villas

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/amalfi/>.



Croatia

Dubrovnik & Dalmatian Coast

Culture + Walking

PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Strolling atop massive medieval walls at sunset
- Enjoying lunchtime camaraderie at a local winery
- Skirting the coast on shepherds' paths with jaw-dropping views

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/croatia/>.



Greek Isles

Crete, Mykonos & Santorini

Culture + Walking

PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Exploring the remarkable ruins of Knossos and Delos
- Sampling the fruits of a cliff-hugging vineyard
- Taking in the iconic views from your hotel in Santorini

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/greece/>.

You might also enjoy...



Puglia

Matera to Lecce

Culture + Walking

PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Rambling green hills and seaside landscapes
- Treading gently on mosaic masterpieces
- Relishing lunch on a 17th century farm

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/puglia/>.



Turkey

Turquoise Coast & Cappadocia

Culture + Walking

PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Admiring architectural wonders of the ancient world
- Cruising between islands on a custom yacht
- Witnessing a potter perfecting his art

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/turkey/>.

“Enthusiasm is Contagious”

AS TRAVEL + LEISURE NAMES CLASSIC JOURNEYS THE WORLD'S BEST TOUR OPERATOR FOR 2019, FOUNDER EDWARD PIEGZA REVEALS HOW IT FEELS. ENTHUSIASTICALLY.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Just before publication of this issue, Travel + Leisure magazine announced that its readers have voted Classic Journeys the World's Best Tour Operator for 2019. It's the second time Classic Journeys has won that recognition and the 14th consecutive year the company has been in the Top 10.

Congratulations! How did you get the news?

I received a top-secret email and phone call from the editor of *Travel + Leisure* a few weeks ago with orders not to tell ANYONE. Friends and neighbors must have wondered why my smile has been so extra big lately. Now they know.

And how does it feel to be the World's Best Tour Operator again?

Awesome. Humbling. So, so satisfying. Deeply gratifying to learn that we have achieved what we set out to do which is to handcraft trips of a lifetime for every guest who travels with us. I'm known as long-winded, so I could probably come up with 10 or 15 more ways to describe it if you want me to keep going.

Why do you think *Travel + Leisure* gave you this recognition?

Actually, it isn't the *T+L* editors who make the decision. That's the best part. Their readers cast the votes. So the people who do the traveling, the guests who explore the world with us and our competitors — they are the ones who raised their hands to tell *T+L* that Classic Journeys is the World's Best Tour Operator based on their own experiences. Let me say it right here: "To all of you who voted for us, you are the World's Best Guests!"

What do you think makes your guests the World's Best Guests?

That's easy. They are curious. They care about connecting with people of different cultures and immersing themselves in the world. They treasure experiences more than things. Like the old ad slogan went, they go for the gusto and crave the chance to have one-of-a-kind moments. They are incredibly interesting and interested people, and all of us at Classic Journeys count it as a real privilege to share in their passion for travel. And we feel that way on the

other 364 days of the year when we're not celebrating recognition like this.

I guess this is what you meant when you told me that "Enthusiasm is contagious."

Absolutely. That's not our official motto, but it could be. We love what we do. We enjoy helping guests figure out how to invest their precious time and budget. I can honestly say that all of us feel that way — the Guest Services folks who interact with you while you're planning your trip, the Tour Operations team members who plan all of the logistics, the local guides who lead each one of our trips full time. There's just a huge amount of positive energy in what we do, and I think it truly is hard to resist. We'd climb into every one of our guest's suitcases and go along with them if we could. Because we can't, we call each guest while they're on tour just to be sure they are having a trip of a lifetime.

Has anyone ever called Classic Journeys obsessive?

I hope so, because we are. Everything is in the details. For instance, we've created a special tour for the total eclipse of the sun which is going to pass over parts of South America in 2020. We've already analyzed likely traffic patterns in the most remote areas and figured out how to structure our itinerary so that our guests will be in place in the path of totality while the people who don't plan ahead will be stuck in jams on remote dirt roads. We enjoy obsessing about details like that so that our guests never have to.



How can you top this?

Oh, we never let ourselves think of it that way. We just continue to approach every single guest on each and every departure like the most important guest we've ever had. It seems to be working! Of course, we keep looking for new ways to win more converts. For 2019, we've launched a new series of Classic Journeys that are based from

"I voted for you!"

We've heard that expression so many times lately from guests who registered their votes with *Travel + Leisure*. Given the results, we know it's true ... and you know that your votes really count!

STAFF AND GUIDES

"I always feel like I'm traveling with a best friend. I prefer your local guides to the ones that other companies fly in."

ITINERARIES AND DESTINATIONS

"If it's on my bucket list, you always seem to go there. Of course, with so many options you always seem to make my list longer and longer!"

ACTIVITIES

"On your trips, I've cooked with Michelin chefs, sung songs with Quechua schoolchildren, and walked on glaciers with the descendants of Vikings. Fun doesn't begin to describe it."

ACCOMMODATIONS

"How you manage so many 5-star properties on these trips shocks me. But please, please, please keep it up!"

FOOD

"I have never eaten so well so often so happily. When you people claim that you are foodies, you aren't kidding."

OVERALL VALUE

"We have never had a better vacation at any price."

river cruise boats. On a different note, seeing how many travelers can't always find as much vacation time as they really want, we have developed a series of 6-day or shorter quick trips that go as far afield as Iceland, the Galápagos and Morocco.

Final thoughts?

It's always an honor to win recognition. But, for all of us at Classic Journeys, the biggest privilege is to share the dreams of our guests and make those dreams come true. That connection is the best feeling of all.