

Agrigento, Taormina & Aeolian Islands

Sicily

Cultural Walking Adventure



CLASSIC JOURNEYS
THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS



“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 walking 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

- Enjoy guided explorations of historic Monreale and Palermo
- Savor a dinner of traditional Sicilian specialties

You'll begin in sunny Palermo at your hotel, located in the heart of the ancient city. From here, enjoy a short drive to Monreale, a beautiful little hill town that overlooks the Conca d'Oro and is 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.

Later in the afternoon, you'll explore Palermo's historical center on foot at eye level, on a guided walk that includes colorful piazzas and courtyards. After, return to the hotel to relax before savoring a delicious dinner of traditional Sicilian specialties.

Overnight: Palermo

Meals: D

DAY 2

REGALEALI / AGRIGENTO

- Taste the culinary traditions of the island during a cooking instruction in a private kitchen
- Stroll through the Regaleali countryside on foot at eye level with your expert guide
- Marvel at the temples illuminated at night

As you travel into the heart of Sicily, enjoy spending time on a picturesque farm near the Regaleali area, known for its excellent wine. Visit a personal friend for an 'only with Classic Journeys' experience as she invites you into her kitchen for a special treat — an opportunity to taste some of the local wine and enjoy a cooking instruction with her. Satiated from a memorable lunch, stretch your legs on a spectacular walk through the rolling countryside surrounding your hosts' home.

Later, head to Agrigento where the Valle dei Templi (Valley of the Temples) is located on a plateau outside of town. Your hotel is perfectly-sited with views of the archeological zone and a beautiful benefit of staying here 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 through history as you explore the Valley of the Temples
- Trace the Mediterranean coast along a scenic footpath

Wake up this morning and prepare to see 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, it's time to explore them with your guide after a visit to the archeological museum, with many historic artifacts from the site. At the temples, roam on your own or with your 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. Enjoy an afternoon nature walk along the Mediterranean coast in a protected area that will surprise you with its calm and unique beauty. Later, return to the hotel with time to relax before dinner.

Overnight: Agrigento

Meals: B, D

DAY 4

SIRACUSA / TAORMINA

- Spot Mt. Etna for the first time as you journey past rolling hills and vineyards
- Weave through lemon and orange groves to a UNESCO World Heritage site in Siracusa
- Browse elegant boutiques and antique shops in Taormina, the town that clings to the cliffs overlooking the Ionian Sea

Leaving behind the ancient ruins, you'll have the chance to admire the everchanging colors of the Sicilian countryside. Drive past rolling hills, vineyards, orange groves and wheat fields, and get your first views of Mt. Etna. Reaching the southeastern part of the island you'll arrive at the coastal town of Siracusa (Syracuse). Greek colonists first put down roots here in 734 BC and 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, enjoy a guided walking exploration of the ancient heart of the city located on the small island of Ortygia, a UNESCO World Heritage site. On foot at eye level you gain a genuine perspective for the impressive scale of the archaeological zone, including ancient side-by-side theaters. The Greek theater could seat up to 15,000 spectators and the Roman amphitheater was the frequent scene of gladiator battles. On a walk, wander into both of them, then follow a footpath into the old limestone quarries that are now filled with lemon and orange trees.

In the afternoon, 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. Arriving at your hotel in Taormina, which is perched on a hill, you'll get picture-perfect views of the surrounding area.

Overnight: Taormina

Meals: B, D

DAY 5

AEOLIAN ISLANDS

- **Hydrofoil across the aquamarine sea to the spectacular volcanic archipelago of the Aeolian Islands**
- **Stretch your legs on a guided walk along the coastal paths, and through olive tree plantations and vineyards**
- **Meander through the twisting lanes of small hamlets past quaint boutiques and outdoor cafes reminiscent of Greece**
- **Explore the archeological museum and the massive 16th-century castle**

This morning you'll board the aliscafo (hydrofoil) for a scenic one-hour ride from the port of Milazzo to the largest of the Aeolian Islands, Lipari. As you approach the island, your first impression may be that you 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.

Once on the island, you're in for a fascinating and immersive day of explorations. You'll join your guide to visit the site of the Geophysical Observatory, where scientists keep a record of 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. 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.

The inhabitants of Lipari and its sister islands — Panarea, Stromboli, Salina, Vulcano — are all extremely friendly. We remember fondly the original scouting of this tour, 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

- **Walk along lava rivers on Mt. Etna**
- **Savor a rustic lunch on the volcano's slopes accompanied by wine grown right on Etna**
- **Explore Taormina's Borgo Medievale and a third-century Greek theater with sea views**

After breakfast, make a short journey 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 the opportunity to see firsthand incredible volcanic formations created over the last several centuries.

Midday you'll be greeted with a rustic lunch of goat cheese, bruschetta, sun-dried tomatoes, Italian sausages, lamb and homemade pastas, accompanied by the excellent red Etna wine grown right on the same slopes. Fortified from lunch, head back to Taormina through the charming village of Linguaglossa — which, in the winter, is a busy ski resort.

DAILY ITINERARY

Sicily: Agrigento, Taormina & Aeolian Islands | Cultural Walking Adventure

In the afternoon, explore Taormina on your own and rummage around the Borgo Medievale (the oldest and most colorful part of town) that allows you 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 seats your panorama includes the blue sea beyond. And the Public Gardens, with its exotic flowers and eccentric follies. If you'd prefer to relax at the hotel, you might lounge by the pool or enjoy a drink on the spectacular terrace before dinner.

Overnight: Taormina

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7

TAORMINA / CATANIA

- Enjoy a leisurely morning in Taormina
- Part company at Catania airport

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

Late morning, drive to Catania to part company at the airport for flights back to mainland Italy.

Meals: B



Tour Hotels



Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa

Located in the heart of the historical center, the hotel is in an ideal position for exploring Palermo and is within easy reach of the city's most important monuments. The structure, parts of which date back to the 16th century, is comprised of several historic buildings including a former monastery, and its magnificent cloister has been wonderfully restored and is now a central feature of the hotel.

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

To see the full list of dates and prices for this tour, go to our website by clicking [here](#).

Want to travel with just your group on a date of your choosing? Visit [CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/PRIVATE](https://www.classicjourneys.com/private) to learn more about Private Journeys.

Trip Essentials

TRIP LENGTH	7 Days, 6 Nights
START	Lobby of Palermo hotel, Palermo, Sicily
END	Catania airport, Catania, Sicily
TERRAIN	Easy to moderate on good trails and coastal paths. An average of 2 to 3 hours of walking per day, with a vehicle 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

- Award-winning boutique hotels that provide you unlimited access to the people and places, culture and history you came to experience
- 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

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

READY TO BOOK?
CLICK TO MAKE A RESERVATION

Or give us a call

1-800-200-3887

Mon-Fri 8:00AM – 5:00PM PST

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

"The food was incredible. And Sergio was amazing (as always). It's clearly his knowledge and his relationships that make this truly a unique and special experience."

-Amanda Hanks., Brooklyn, NY.