



Tour Information



Baroque Sicily





Travel

Passports

Please ensure your 10-year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full six months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to Italy.

Visas

Visas are not required for British and EU nationals. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

Italian Consulate-General: "Harp House", 83/86 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4BL.
Tel: (0)20 7936 5900. Fax: (0)20 7583 9425.
Email: consolato.londra@esteri.it
Website:
http://www.conslondra.esteri.it/Consolato_Londra
Open Mon-Fri 0900-1200



Tickets

Included with this documentation is an e-ticket, which shows the reference number for your flight. EasyJet have now replaced all of their airport check-in desks with EasyJet Baggage Drop desks. **Therefore you must check-in online and print out your boarding passes before travelling.** Checking in online also provides the opportunity for you to pre-book seats, if you wish, at an additional cost.

Online check-in is available any time prior to travel using the reference number provided. Please see the enclosed e-ticket for more information or visit; www.easyjet.com

Please check that the details on your documentation are accurate and that all names are spelt correctly and match the names on your passport. Your flight ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



Baggage Allowance

We advise you to check the baggage allowances carefully as you are likely to be charged the excess if you exceed the weight limit. Maximum weights for single bags apply.

With Easyjet your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus **one** cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45 x 25 cm. Overhead locker space is limited on board the aircraft and on busy flights your cabin bag may have to go in the hold.

Please contact the airline for further information
<http://www.easyjet.com/en/planning/baggage>

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Transfers

On arrival in Catania, transfer to Modica and to Hotel Principe d'Aragona.

Departure Tax

The departure tax is included in the price of your flight tickets.

Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements. Please note that some airlines may charge for use of wheelchairs.



Accommodation

Hotel Principe d'Aragona, Modica

The Hotel Principe d'Aragona is a small and modern four-star hotel with just 35 rooms, with a superb location in the historic centre of Modica within walking distance of the main attractions and shopping areas. Facilities include an outdoor pool, sun terrace, lounge bar serving light snacks as well as drinks, and comfortable bedrooms with private bath/shower, hairdryer, air-conditioning, TV, telephone, wi-fi, safe, and minibar.

For more information please visit the hotel's website:
<http://www.hotelprincipedaragona.it/english/>



Food

Inspired by the many cultures that have settled on the island these past two millennia, Sicilian cuisine has a touch of Greek, Spanish, Arab, and of course Italian to it. The surrounding sea provides plenty of seafood, the rich, fertile soil of the island is perfect for growing olives, citrus fruit, aubergine, tomatoes, pistachios and almonds – the results are a varied, fresh, and mouth-watering combination.

Traditional dishes include *Caponata* (side dish of aubergine, capers and sweet balsamic vinegar), *Maccu* (Fava bean soup), *Arancini* (fried rice ball – a traditional snack), and *Sfincione* (Sicilian pizza, thick base with various delicious toppings).

Pasta dishes are also popular – try *Spaghetti ai ricci* (sea urchin pasta), the aubergine, tomato, basil and ricotta *Pasta alla norma* (originally from Catania), or *Manicotti* (similar to *cannelloni*, tubes of pasta filled and baked) – as is seafood, freshly caught, served simply grilled, boiled or fried. As for meat, the most frequently seen are lamb and goat. A result of the Arab control of the island in the 10th and 11th centuries, apricots, melons, raisins, saffron and couscous often feature in dishes – such as *Couscous al pesce*.

Typical sweets include *Cannoli* (crusted tube filled with ricotta and sugar), *Cassata* (rich, creamy ricotta filled cake), *Gelato* (possibly invented in Sicily), and the lighter *Granita* (sweetened and flavoured crushed ice).

Table service is common in most restaurants and bars. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, and no further tipping is required.



Drink

The world's largest wine producer, Italy is home to some of the oldest viticulture regions. Named according to their grape variety or after their village or area of origin, excellent wines are produced throughout Italy and Sicily, with local wines offering great value and quality. With an ideal climate and soil (thanks to Mount Edna) grapes have been grown in Sicily since the Greeks first colonised the island. The dry white and rosé wines are excellent accompaniments to the seafood dishes, whereas the Nero d'Avola produces sumptuous hearty reds.

The most famous Sicilian wine, the fortified *Marsala*, is similar to sherry and port and comes in *oro* (golden), *ambra* (amber), or *rubio* (ruby), in a range from sweet to dry varieties. The golden, sweet, sometimes sparkling dessert wine *Moscato* is very pleasing.

Sicily also produces excellent liqueurs, such as *Ala*, *Averna*, *Fichera*, and some that can also be found on the mainland – *Limoncello*, *Grappa*, *Anisette* and *Amaretto*.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily



Destination

The charming Baroque towns of the Southeast corner of Sicily have been popularised in recent years by the atmospheric TV series Inspector Montalbano. The area's rich artistic and architectural heritage, and gorgeous piazzas and lanes reminiscent of an age gone by are the perfect setting for filming and visiting.

Places of interest included in your tour:

Modica

Comprised of two separate areas *Alta* (high) and *Bassa* (low), connected by flights of steps, Modica is an attractive historic town in south-eastern Sicily, one of the area's UNESCO-listed Baroque towns. Modica is particularly famous for its chocolate, and it is an appealing destination for food-lovers. Modica is situated in the dramatic landscape of the Monti Iblei, a range of high ground divided up by deep valleys and surprisingly populous towns. Important in Medieval times, Modica was rebuilt after the great earthquake of 1693 and now boasts fine late-Baroque architecture as well as a medieval old town. Modica is built around a junction of steep valleys, with the oldest part of town, Modica Alta ('Upper Modica') on a ridge in between. Modica Bassa ('Lower Modica') is the more recent (though still historic) district along the valley bottoms. Rivers once ran down Modica's valleys, lined with buildings, but after a terrible flood in 1902, when they burst their banks, they were covered over. The town's main street, Corso Umberto I, follows the course of one of these rivers, in the valley to the west of Modica Alta. Nowadays the busiest part of the town centre is at the junction of two valleys where Corso Umberto opens into Piazza Municipio, overlooked by an eighteenth-century hilltop clocktower. Modica is a large and busy, authentically Sicilian town. It boasts some very fine Baroque architecture, picturesque views and historic lanes. As well as Modica Alta and Modica Bassa, there is also a third part of town, Modica Sorda, a modern suburb detached from the historic part of Modica.

For more information about Modica, please visit:
<http://www.italyheaven.co.uk/sicily/modica.html>

Siracusa

The capital of Southeast Sicily, Siracusa, dates back some 27 centuries, is a pleasant town and a fine

cultural destination, its significance is recognised with a UNESCO heritage listing. The city's finest sight is the superb Archaeological Park of Neapolis, which includes a range of monuments in its limits, with more to be seen just outside (don't miss the vast Altar of Hieron, which can be seen from the little approach road). Siracusa's Greek theatre (Teatro Greco) is one of the finest and largest of its kind. Cut directly into the rock, it was enlarged and modified several times over the centuries and is still in use today. The deep quarry to the east of the theatre is called the Latomia del Paradiso (Paradise Quarry), and it's a peaceful and green spot, filled with vegetation and lemon trees. The most famous sight here is the huge cave called the Ear of Dionysius (Orecchio di Dionisio). Apparently, it was Caravaggio who coined the name; the connection with Dionysius is the story that this ruler of ancient Syracuse used to eavesdrop on his prisoners incarcerated here, thanks to the cave's acoustics. A second cave nearby, the Grotta dei Cordari was used by the ropemakers who gave the place its name.

For more information about Siracusa, please visit:
<http://www.italyheaven.co.uk/sicily/siracusa.html>

Ibla di Ragusa

Ragusa is one of the most picturesque towns in Sicily. The view from the upper town over Ragusa Ibla on its own separate hilltop is quite breathtaking. One of the UNESCO-listed Baroque towns of south-eastern Sicily, Ragusa is also one of the principal filming locations for the Sicilian detective drama *Il Commissario Montalbano* (Inspector Montalbano), a series which has done wonders for publicising the beauty of this area. Ragusa is in the Monti Iblei, a large area of high ground, divided up by dry stone walls and incised with ravines. The town was originally built on a small steep-sided hill with deep valleys on three sides separating it from the high plateau. After the earthquake of 1693, which destroyed many of south-eastern Sicily's buildings, it was decided to rebuild Ragusa on higher, more level ground nearby. This new planned town was built, with straight streets and a rational layout, but local aristocrats didn't want to move, and instead built themselves new palazzi on the ruins of the old town. So nowadays Ragusa has two parts: Ibla (or Ragusa Ibla), the older nucleus on its hilltop, and

Ragusa Superiore, the more modern upper town which spreads from the post-earthquake streets into more recent developments.

For more information about Ibla di Ragusa, please visit: <http://www.italyheaven.co.uk/sicily/ragusa.html>

Noto and Marzememi

Another city rebuilt after the 1693 earthquake, Noto in southeastern Sicily, Italy, and is known for its baroque architecture, including the reconstructed 18th-century Noto Cathedral. Across the street is the Palazzo Ducezio, now the town hall, with the Hall of Mirrors embellished by gilding and stuccos. Nearby, the Palazzo Nicolaci has richly decorated balconies. Resembling a triumphal arch, the 19th-century Porta Reale marks the entrance to the city. Marzememi has an exotic flair to it. It started as a fishing village and continues the tradition today. But Marzememi, unlike many other towns in Sicily, doesn't have Greek roots; rather it was founded by the Arabs and originally called Marsa' al Hamen (which translates as "harbour of the turtle doves"). The romantic name lends itself nicely to the town, which looks more like a Moroccan or Arab setting than an Italian one. The compact town centers on the sea, with a wide piazza that holds the cathedral, the old tonnara and the town's main palazzo.

For more information about Noto, please visit: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noto>

For more information about Marzememi, please visit: <https://www.summerinitaly.com/guide/marzememi>

In the tracks of Montalbano – Scicli and Punta Secca

We visit the small UNESCO gem of **Scicli**, where Montalbano's police station is located. The town also boasts quaint narrow lanes, admirable architecture and many small baroque churches. Scicli is an ancient town, which grew up around two valleys divided by steep ridges, emerging onto a wider vale. Early settlements were up on the ridges - the town's principal church, San Matteo, sat on a commanding position overlooking the smaller valleys as they opened into a wider vale. Around the church, on the slopes, were clustered cave-dwellings. Over time, as the defensive functions of the site grew less important, the town shifted down the hillside and nowadays the inhabited area fills the wide level vale like a grey flood of buildings below the old church on its headland.

The afternoon is spent along the lovely southern coastline with a stop at Montalbano's house in the small fishing village of **Punta Secca**. Punta Secca is a

small seaside hamlet with suggestive rocky outcrops in front of the main beach. These particular cliffs are called "A sicca", meaning "sand-bank". Once it was a very important trading centre, but today is just a small fishing harbor dominated by its majestic lighthouse. It was built in 1853 and is 34 m high. In the little central square, there is the house of Inspector Montalbano, which became famous for the Italian tv series. The building is private, but it is visited by many fans of the tv series who go there just to take a picture in front of the Italian fictional policeman's house.

Reading & watching suggestions

Inspector Montalbano

Based on the detective novels by Andrea Camilleri, this popular television series was filmed in Sicily – Modica, Ragusa, Scicli, Punta Secca.

Giovanni Verga

The great Sicilian writer immortalised the varied landscapes, towns, villages and sites of Sicily and its centuries of feuding. His best known novella (and later opera) *Cavalleria Rusticana* and his collection of novels about his home, *Novelle Rusticane*, will give you a taste of Sicily.

Theresa Maggio, *The Stone Boudoir*

Travel writer Theresa Maggion journeys to her ancestor's land and beautifully describes the charm of Sicilian villages, the splendour of the landscapes and the complexity of the culture.

Goethe, *Italian Journey, 1817*.

The diary of his trip to Italy and Sicily in 1786-88, in which he mentions that "To have seen Italy without having seen Sicily is to not have seen Italy at all, for Sicily is the clue to everything."

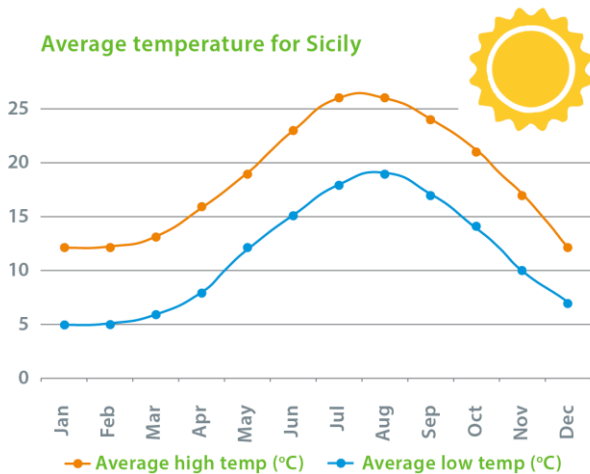
Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.



The Basics

Climate – The weather in Sicily at this time of year should be warm and pleasant, with temperatures higher than in the UK. But there is always the chance of the odd shower, so our best advice is to come prepared.



Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct);
GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar)

Language – Italian

Religion – predominantly Roman Catholic

National holidays – New Year's Day (01 Jan); Epiphany (06 Jan); Easter Monday; Liberation Day (25 Apr); Labour Day (01 May); Republic Day (02 Jun); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints' Day (01 Nov); Immaculate Conception (08 Dec); Christmas Day (25 Dec); St Stephens Day (26 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable

form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find plenty of bottled water for sale too)

Shops – Department stores and supermarkets are open Mon-Sat 0830-1930. Most small shops close between 1230 and 1600. Please note that most shops close on Sundays.

Although very common in tourist towns in Italy, please note that street vendors selling all kinds of designer knockoffs are illegal and could land you with a hefty fine. Care should also be taken when buying antiques since Italy is renowned for skilled imitators.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – Bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone in Italy, depending on your operator and contract.

Tipping – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Mosquitos

Like most Mediterranean islands, you might get a few mosquitos about in the evenings, so it is worth taking some repellent.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

We would advise ensuring that your travel insurance has full health cover in the event that the EHIC becomes invalid following the end of the transition period in December 2020.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7841 023807

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Consulate Rome

Via XX Settembre 80/a

00187 Rome

Italy

Email: italy.consulate@fco.gov.uk

Tel: +39 06 4220 2431

Fax: +39 06 4220 2334

Open Mon-Fri 0900-1700.

Outside these hours, emergency consular assistance is available on +44 (0) 207 008 1500.

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