

Tour  
Information



# Gastronomic Sicily





## Passports

Please ensure your 10 year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit.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](mailto:consolato.londra@esteri.it)

Website:

[http://www.conslondra.esteri.it/Consolato\\_Londra](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 extra 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](http://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 20kg 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 by coach to Acireale (approx. 40 minutes).

## 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 Santa Caterina

The four-star Santa Caterina Hotel enjoys a panoramic location overlooking the sea, with recently restored rooms, a swimming pool with solarium and restaurant “Aquadelferro” with a magnificent view. Rooms are comfortable with a Sicilian design; all have private bathroom, air-conditioning, TV, free Wi-Fi, hairdryer and fridge.

For more information please visit the hotel’s website:  
<http://www.santacaterinahotel.com/en>



### 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 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> 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

**4 lunches**

**2 dinners**



## Destination

This wonderful new tour explores the gastronomic culture of Sicily in the company of our longstanding Sicilian guide Tullio Scurria who has organised and led tours for our clients on this wonderful island for more than 15 years. Sicilian cuisine is one of the finest in the world with wonderful local ingredients and a vibrant Mediterranean culture combining to forge a unique food culture, explored on this innovative tour. From colourful street markets, to produce tasting and tours, cookery demonstrations with local experts and lots of eating! Tullio will lead you on a (tasty) voyage of discovery.

### Day 2

#### Catania

Catania's raucous fish market, which takes over the streets behind Piazza del Duomo every workday morning, is street theatre at its most thrilling. Tables groan under the weight of decapitated swordfish, ruby-pink prawns and trays full of clams, mussels, sea urchins and all manner of mysterious sea life. Fishmongers gut silvery fish and high-heeled housewives step daintily over pools of blood-stained water. It's absolutely riveting. Surrounding the market are a number of good seafood restaurants, we will visit a typical osteria for lunch.

Sicily's second city, **Catania** boasts one of the greatest Roman ruins - the Amphitheatre in Piazza Stesicoro, and fabulous baroque architecture: Churches, Convents, Piazza del Duomo and the Cathedral of Santa Agatha, where the composer Bellini is buried. Catania also hosts the largest daily open market in Sicily "Fera o' luni".

### Day 3

#### La Cucina of Monica Consoli

This morning we go to Viagrande, situated in one of the most characteristic villages on the slopes of Mount Etna, to experience "la cucina" of Monica Consoli. Monica has followed the footsteps of Eleonora Consoli, her mother, who was a well-known cookbook writer and we will be her guests in her spacious home kitchen, in a typical Sicilian house dating from the 18th century. After a briefing on the history of "Cucina Siciliana" which has been influenced by so many invaders: Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, French, Spaniards, Italians, we learn how to cook the Sicilian way, where you may choose to actively participate. As

you cook together, Monica shares personal anecdotes and stories of Sicilian culture and its age-old traditions, habits and culinary customs that she learned from her mother. Afterwards you will sit down and enjoy a scrumptious "full" Sicilian lunch, with wine of course, that you can be proud of!

### Day 4

#### Etna Wine Valley

Today we head to Passopisciaro Village in the Etna Wine Valley, to visit "Etna-Feudo di Mezzo", a wine estate of the ancient family of Planeta, whose prestigious wines are renowned both in Italy and abroad. We will visit the winery built on the lava soil of the 1566 eruption, at 879 metres above sea level and taste five varieties of wine produced here. You can also buy it and Planeta will deliver your order directly to your home. The day will also include a typical Etna light lunch in the Wine Estate, followed by Etna home-made liqueurs and cake tasting in a local "Enoteca".

### Day 5

#### Free day.

A free day to explore the local market in Acireale.

### Day 6

#### Olive oil and Taormina

Morning visit to an old fashion oil mill, where pressing takes place in a traditional way. It is part of the Camolio Farm, in the town of Paternò at the foot of Mount Etna, and is a traditional family producer of olives and olive oil. Carluccio, the owner, a well-known olive oil sommelier in Sicily, will tell us about different olive varieties, extra virgin olive oils, its recipes, and of course, we will sample them accompanied by glasses of wine. You can also buy extra virgin olive oil and olives and Camolio Farm will deliver your order directly to your home. A typical Sicilian "Rosticceria spuntino" light lunch, in a nearby bar, before going to Taormina for an independent visit.

**Taormina** boasts a superb position, perched on a series of high terraces, dating back to the Greeks and the Romans, and has been a popular tourist destination since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The town's most remarkable sight is the ancient Greek-Roman theatre, one of the most celebrated ruins in Sicily. Other highlights include the 10<sup>th</sup> century *Palazzo*

*Corvaja*, the Church of San Domenico, and the 17<sup>th</sup> century Baroque fountain.

## Day 7

### Producer visits and Nelson Castle

A drive through the fertile agricultural land around Mount Etna where chestnut and porcini mushrooms, strawberries and pistachios are produced, crossing small towns and villages along the way, and stopping to sample local specialities. A lunch at your leisure is followed by a visit to Nelson Castle, a former Benedictine abbey, founded by the Normans and presented in 1799 to Admiral Nelson by the Bourbon King Ferdinand IV. We head back to the hotel via the pistachio growing region with stops for cake and ice cream. Farewell dinner in one of the typical restaurants along the Acitrezza coastline.

## Reading/film suggestions

### *Cinema Paradiso*

For his charming film, Tornatore chose Sicily as a filming location – the stunning landscape and atmospheric towns are the perfect backdrop for this delightful Oscar-winning production.

### 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.

### Leonardo Sciascia, *Open Doors*, *The Wine Dark Sea*, *The Day of the Owl*, *Sicilian Uncles ...*

Through his excellent stories and essays, Sicilian author Leonardo Sciascia provides a fascinating insight into modern Sicilian history, family ties, political parties, alliances and allegiances.

### 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.

### Giuseppe de Lampedusa, *The Leopard*

Describing the changes in Sicilian life in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the decadence of the aristocracy and the rise of democracy and revolution, Giuseppe di Lampedusa perfectly combines public and private, in a beautiful, powerful historical novel.

### 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."

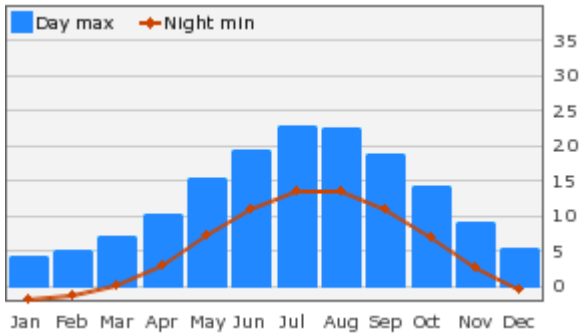
## Tour manager

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 the Aeolian archipelago should be pleasant, but there is always the chance of the odd shower. 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 and museums** – You will see appealing shops selling souvenirs, artisanal produce and traditional food and drink. Opening hours on small islands tend to be from 0900-1300 and 1600-1900.

**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. 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.

**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](http://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.

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 20 7431 8201 or

00 44 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

**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](mailto: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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