

Tour
Information



Highlights of 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Please ensure your 10 year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit.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
Website:
http://www.conslondra.esteri.it/Consolato_Londra
Open Mon-Fri 0900-1200

Flight Times

Your travel itinerary, giving confirmed timings and details will be sent to you along with your tickets 10 to 14 days before your departure.



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

Please take care not to lose your tickets and please check that the details on your tickets are accurate and that all names are spelt correctly and match the names on your passport. Your Group Scheduled or Club Class ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

Seats and Flight

Some airlines have the facility to allow you to pre-book your seat prior to arriving at the airport either by telephone, or online. Please speak to us for further information.

Please note that no meals are served on these flights so you may wish to make arrangements to eat prior to boarding.



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. Please note that personal bags (such as handbag or computer case) must be stored within you single piece of hand luggage and that on some busy flights you bag may have to go into the hold, at no extra cost. If you bring **one** piece of cabin baggage no bigger than 50 x 40 x 20 cm, it is guaranteed to always travel with you in the cabin, in the overhead lockers or under the seat in front of you.

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 Enna and the Federico II Palace Hotel.

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

Al Madarig Hotel

Located in Castellammare's historic main square, in the heart of the town, this friendly three-star hotel stands proud on a wide piazza overlooking the sea. Facilities here include a comfortable lounge and bar area to relax in after a long day, and nicely furnished bedrooms with private bath/shower, hairdryer, air-conditioning, TV, telephone, wi-fi, safe and minibar. Take the stone stairway down to the lovely beach.

For more information please visit the hotel's website:
<http://www.almadarig.com/uk/index.htm>

Federico II Palace Hotel, Enna Bassa

In the lower part of the city of Enna, the four-star Federico II Palace Hotel is located in the perfect spot – away from the hustle and bustle of the main centre whilst also being conveniently situated for the town's main attractions. The hotel's facilities include a bar and restaurant, and boasts a wellness centre and gym, as well as indoor pool and seasonal outdoor pool. Bedrooms are comfortable with private bath/shower, hairdryer, air-conditioning, TV, telephone, minibar, and safe.

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

Unfortunately rooms at the Al Madarig and Federico II Palace Hotel do not include coffee/tea making facilities, so we recommend you bring a travel kettle if required.



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; **2 Lunches/brunches**; **4 Dinners**



Destination

From Greek temples and Roman villas, to the majesty of Etna, delightful seaside towns, farmhouse lunches, and wine-tastings – this tour truly includes all Sicily’s highlights. In the company of a local expert, discover the breadth of history and culture that this fabulous island has to offer.

Places of interest included in your tour:

Enna Bassa

One of the oldest human settlements in Sicily, and the centre of the island, Enna is split in two parts. Enna Alta sits almost 1000 metres above sea level, perched high on a hill, surrounded by cliffs, whereas Enna Bassa, the more modern part of the town, located in the midst of plains, than turn green, yellow or brown, according to season, offers stunning views of the surroundings.

Piazza Armerina

The magnificent mosaics in the *Roman Villa of Casale* at Piazza Armerina, that has UNESCO World Heritage Status, are a testament to the city’s flourishing during Roman times. Piazza Armerina also has a rich medieval history, and is home to some impressive buildings, including the 14th century *Aragonese castle* and a stunning Baroque *Cathedral*.

Caltagirone

Caltagirone is a leading centre for the production of ceramics in Sicily, an art that locals have inherited from the Greeks. Inhabited since very ancient times, the town was badly affected by the 1693 earthquake, and rebuilt in the earthquake Baroque style. Highlights in this UNESCO World Heritage listed town include the *Scala Santa Maria del Monte*, with its 142 steps, intricately decorated with ceramic tiles, and the *Church of Santa Maria Maddalena*, one of the most beautiful in eastern Sicily.

Catania and Taormina

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”. **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 19th 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 10th century *Palazzo Corvaja*, the *Church of San Domenico*, and the 17th century Baroque *fountain*.

Etna

Europe’s largest active volcano, **Mount Etna** dominates the whole of Eastern/central Sicily, and most recently erupted in 2001 and 2002. You will take a breath-taking drive to the barren, eerie black lava landscape and see the damaging effects of these eruptions.

Agrigento

One of the most captivating archaeological sites in the world, with UNESCO World Heritage Status, the magnificent remains of the “Valley of Greek Temples”, monumental Doric temples built in the 6th and 5th centuries BC, are some of the best preserved Greek buildings outside of Greece itself.

Castellammare del Golfo

The ancient Greek port for Segesta and Erice, typically Sicilian seaside town Castellammare del Golfo is ideally situated for the exploring western Sicily. The town offers wonderful views of the bay and has a picturesque *medieval quarter*, a pleasant seafront lined with restaurants and cafés, and the impressive *Aragonese castle*.

Cefalù

The charming and picturesque medieval resort of Cefalù still retains its original Greek shape dating back to the 4th century BC. Highlights here include the Norman *Cathedral* with beautiful Byzantine mosaics, a delightful seafront lined with old fisherman’s houses.

Palermo

The bustling capital of Sicily, exotic Palermo has retained its historical centre, with architecture

reflecting its tempestuous past with Arabic, Norman, and Baroque influences. Sights here include the *Palatine Chapel* in the *Royal Palace*, the 12th century *Cathedral*, *San Domenico Church*, Islamic *San Giovanni degli Ermeti* dating from 1132, and the Baroque *Chapel of the Oratory of the Rosary of Santa Cita*, as well as several interesting museums, lively streets, piazzas and much more.

We shall also make our way to nearby *Monreale* to see the remarkable Byzantine mosaics in the Norman *Cathedral*.

For more information about Palermo:
<http://www.visitpalermo.it/>

Segesta

Following the tradition of Virgil's *Aeneid*, **Segesta** is said to be founded in the most ancient times by exiles from Troy and is home to two important Greek monuments, built in the 5th century BC. The well-preserved Doric temple, with its 36 columns, is the most iconic symbol of Sicilian archaeology and the semi-circular theatre carved out of the Monte Barbaro is just as impressive.

Selinunte

The ancient Greek ruins of the unnamed temples at Selinunte, all of which overlook the sea, are one of the oldest and most striking archaeological sites in the Mediterranean. Ongoing excavation has revealed eight temples, an acropolis and a fortification system, thought to date from the city's heyday in the 6th century BC.

Reading & watching 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-19th 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."

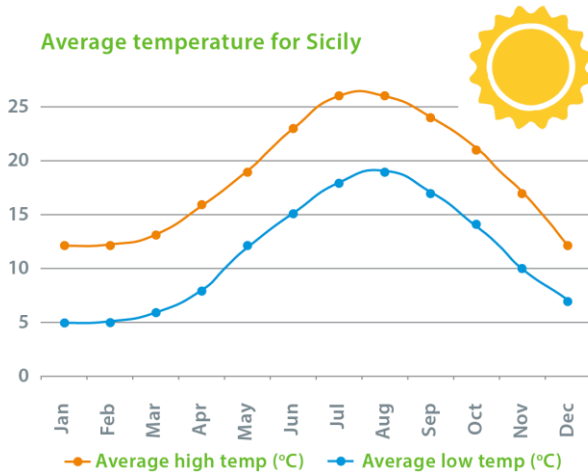
Tour manager

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 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.

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

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.

Travel Editions

3 Young's Buildings, London EC1V 9DB

Tel: 0207 2510045

Email: info@traveleditions.co.uk www.traveleditions.co.uk

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