

JEWELS OF SICILY



TRIP OVERVIEW

Located in the heart of the Mediterranean, the magical isle of Sicily has been fought over and coveted for millennia by the Phoenicians, Greek, Romans, Arabs, Normans and Byzantines, all of whom bequeathed to the island splendid examples of their civilisation which can still be seen today. Our comprehensive tour introduces you to Sicily's highlights including majestic Mount Etna, beautifully-preserved Greek Temples and chaotic yet vibrant Palermo.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Sicily. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Catania D

Depart London on your scheduled flight to Catania, where you will be met by a guide and transferred to your hotel. In the evening, enjoy a welcome dinner at a restaurant.

DAY 2: Catania B

Following breakfast, the day will begin with a drive to the legendary Mount Etna, ascending the winding road through lava fields to reach the highest point by coach. Once there you'll have the option (payable locally) to take a thrilling journey higher up the volcano in a 4x4 vehicle accompanied by a local expert, alternatively enjoy a light trek up the volcano. In the afternoon the tour will continue to the quaint hilltop town of Taormina, once a firm favourite with the likes of Oscar Wilde and D.H. Lawrence. Exploring the main sites by foot, you'll visit Piazza Vittorio Emanuele and the medieval 10th century Palazzo Corvaja, a carefully-preserved palace with characteristic black lava and white limestone inlays. One of Taormina's highlights is a visit to the magnificent Teatro Greco, a 3rd century BC amphitheatre whose incredible acoustics mean that even a stage-whisper can be heard in the back row.

DAY 3: Catania B

Depart your hotel in the morning to visit the beautiful ancient Greek city of Syracuse, the birthplace of mathematician Archimedes, who famously discovered the principles of displacement and ran through the city shouting "eureka". After some time exploring the main streets, continue on to Ortygia, a small island joined to Syracuse by two bridges whose old-fashioned charm still resound in its archaeological treasures. You'll be left with some free time to find a spot for lunch before returning to your hotel for an afternoon at leisure. Alternatively, choose the optional tour of Noto (at a fee), declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site thanks to its impressive array of Baroque buildings with miraculously preserved frescoed walls and ornate carvings.

DAY 4: Catania to Agrigento B/D

After breakfast the tour continues to the magnificent country mansion of Villa Romana del Casale. This fascinating ancient abode dating back to the 4th century BC houses some of the world's most impressive Roman mosaics, including pastel-coloured frescoes and beautiful depictions of animal hunting scenes. Later arrive in Agrigento in time for dinner.

DAY 5: Agrigento to Palermo B

Depart in the morning for a guided walking tour of the incredible Greek remains in the Valley of the Temples. This splendid archaeological park consists of 5th century BC temples, most notably the Concordia which is reminiscent of the Parthenon in Athens. Visible from miles around, these UNESCO recognised relics are true wonders of the ancient world. There will be some free time for lunch before a fascinating tour on foot of the historical old town including Via Atenea, a charming strip lined with trattorias, boutiques and palazzos concealed within the winding streets. Upon your tour's conclusion, visit a nearby winery to sample the

produce of Sicily's distinct Nero d'Avola and Inzolia grapes. The evening will be spent in Palermo where you will be staying for the next three nights.

DAY 6: Palermo B

Today's half-day excursion takes you to Sicily's UNESCO recognised capital city, Palermo — a melting pot of architectural influences, from the magnificent Arab-Norman Cathedral to the Palatine Chapel covered with Byzantine mosaics glistening with marble and gold. We've included a guided tour of this stunning chapel found on the ground floor of the Palazzo Reale, originally built for Arab rulers and their harems in the 9th century and restored by the conquering Normans in 1140. Enjoy some free time for lunch, perusing the many outdoor market stalls and sampling local specialities such as arrancine, rice balls stuffed with melting cheese or succulent pane con milza, a veal spleen sandwich. Later today you have the chance to take an optional excursion (at a fee) to the town of Monreale and its cathedral, famed for its glorious golden mosaics and two striking Romanesque bronze doors, of which just a handful remain throughout Europe. Perched on the hilltop of this pretty town, those who have the energy to climb the steps to the roof will appreciate a beautiful panoramic view of Palermo and the surrounding countryside stretching to the sea.

DAY 7: Palermo B

After a busy week, today is at leisure to do as you please for your last day in Sicily. There's still plenty more to see in Palermo and those wanting to seek out gifts and souvenirs to take home should head to La Vucciria, Palermo's most famous market situated in the centro storico and side streets around Piazza san Domenico, then wander onto the Ballarò, Palermo's oldest Arabic market specialising in local food and clothing. The Church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio found behind the City Hall is certainly worth discovering, with a magnificent bell tower serving as an apogee of Norman-Arab architecture. In the evening choose from one of the many friendly trattorias specialising in Sicilian dishes such as a colourful antipasti with grilled prawns and octopus in fresh olive oil, before retiring to your hotel for your final evening.

DAY 8: Palermo to UK or extension B

This morning, you will be transferred to the airport in Catania for your return flight back to the UK, or continue on to your Taormina Beach stay.

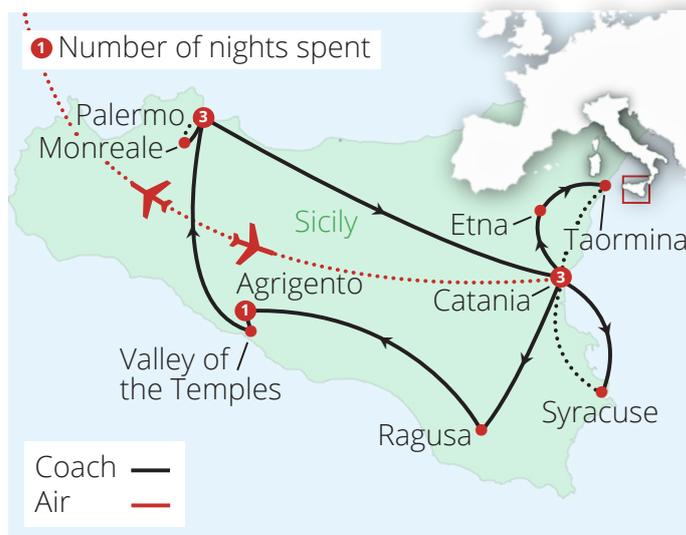
ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

Hotel information

Catania (3 nights): 4★ Katane Palace
Via Camillo Finocchiaro Aprile,
110, 95129 Catania CT, Italy
Contact number: 0039 095 747 0702

Agrigento (1 night): 4★ Colleverde Park
Via Portulano, 1,
92100 Agrigento AG, Italy
Contact number: 0039 0922 29555

Palermo (3 nights): 4★ NH Palermo
Foro Umberto I, 22,
90133 Palermo, Italy
Contact number: 0039 091 616 5090



Accommodation

All accommodation is 4★ and features an en suite bathroom, air-conditioning, satellite TV and a hairdryer. Mercury Holidays has visited and inspected all of the hotels to ensure that they meet the high standards of service which we require for our clients. If the hotels detailed are not available alternatives will be used of a similar standard.

Final confirmation of your hotels will be sent in a document approximately 10 days before you travel.

Meals

Breakfast daily and dinner where applicable will be served at the hotel. Any dietary requirements and dislikes should be made known to our reservations staff at the time of booking.

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival into Sicily you will be met by a representative from our local agent, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your guide will be able to answer any queries you may have, however if you need to contact Little Italy Tours during your stay the details are:

Little Italy Tours

P.iva 02305120590, P.zza Municipio, 9 Terracina Italy
Telephone Number: 0035 0773700062

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for **Little Italy Tours**
Mr Cristian Amuro Mobile: 0035 3382973972

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

A visa is not required for your trip to Sicily Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding passport validity.

Insurance

You must obtain suitable travel insurance prior to departure. Mercury Holidays is partnered with Holiday Extras which offer insurance at the following prices:

Age in years	Up to 10 days	Up to 17 days
18-30 years	£16	£21
31-50 years	£17	£22
51-60 years	£18	£23
61-64 years	£21	£27
65-69 years	£38	£44
70-74 years	£42	£48
75-85 years	£62	£68

(Worldwide excluding the USA)

For all persons 86 years and over, please contact us for insurance prices. To book your travel insurance with us please contact our reservations department on 01732 775000. If you have an existing policy with another company, please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Tour Guides

This is an escorted tour, meaning that you will have the services of an English speaking guide during each excursion ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Tipping

Tipping is at your discretion, however we would recommend approximately €3 per person per day. Tips are accepted in the local currency, however it is asked that if you do not tip in the local currency that you only pay with notes, as coins cannot be exchanged.

Health and Vaccinations

It is strongly recommended that you check the latest health recommendations for travel to Sicily with your GP at least 4-6 weeks before travel. Any medicines you may need during your journey should be packed in your hand luggage. We suggest it is worth taking a few first aid supply such as travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc. Because these products can be more expensive abroad and familiar brands are not always available. If your visit is between April and September, you should always take mosquito repellent.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with an average level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves moderate days of walking on uneven paths and small hills, and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.

Tap Water

Tap water is fine to drink in Sicily.

Group Size

The minimum number of passengers on your tour will be 20, and the maximum number of passengers will be 35. If in the unlikely event your tour does not reach the minimum passenger numbers then you may be asked to change to a different date. A full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Sicily is the Euro (€). We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK, however cash machines are available in all the major cities to withdraw money in the local currency.

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times or sailing conditions. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to the local conditions.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any lunch or dinners where these are not mentioned on your itinerary and personal purchases, such as souvenirs, extra drinks and snacks. Approximately £200-£300 per person should be sufficient for the duration of your tour. Please also bear in mind that there will be several shopping opportunities throughout your tour.

Credit Card Information

As normal practice you may be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Electricity Supply

The electricity supply is 220V-240V. You will need a two pin round plug adapter in Italy.

WHAT TO PACK

- Insect repellent
- Suncream and a hat with a big brim for sunny days
- Comfortable walking shoes such as trainers
- Sunglasses
- Towel, swimsuit and plastic bags
- Ruck sack or light bag per person
- Personal toiletries and first aid kit
- Light rain coat

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Your initial flight is to **Catania-Fontanarossa Airport** with **British Airways (BA)**, departing from **London Gatwick, North Terminal**.

Route	Depart	Arrive	Flight Duration	Flight Number
Gatwick - Catania	15:10	19:15	3 hours	BA2594
Catania - Gatwick	20:00	22:15	3 hours 15 minutes	BA2595

IMPORTANT: Please note that all flight times and numbers listed above are provided for guidance only and are subject to change. Final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Baggage Allowance

Each passenger is entitled to 23KG of hold luggage plus 1 item of hand luggage not exceeding in size and 1 personal item such as a handbag, briefcase or laptop case. Weight restrictions will be finalized on E-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in. Check-In should be at least 3 hours before departure.

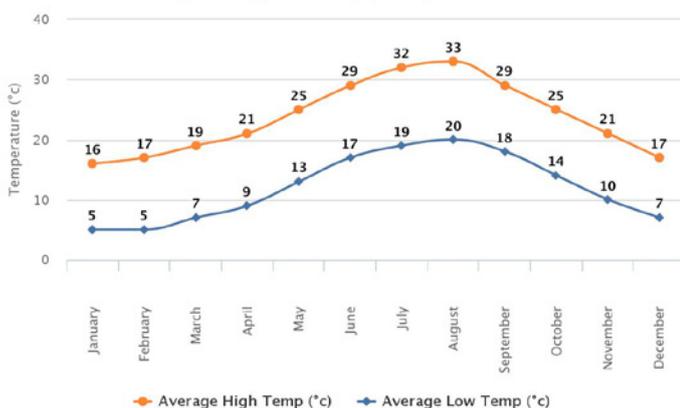
Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.

Average Temperature (°C) Graph for Catania



Average Temperature (°C) Graph for Palermo

