

Hidden Jewels of Sicily and the Amalfi

16 Days / 15 Nights

May 4 -19, 2012

Day 1, Friday May 4th – ROME to SICILY

Today we fly from Rome to Catania on the eastern coast of Sicily.

The flight is just over 1 hour and on landing in Sicily we will be transferred by minibus from the airport in Catania to our hotel in Taormina.

After checking in to our hotel we will take a private guided tour of Taormina and its main sites.

Taormina is positioned on Mount Tauro and offers wonderful views of Mt Etna. The evening at your own leisure to absorb the beautiful Taormina on your first "Sicilian" evening.



The ancient Greek theatre Taormina

Day 2, Saturday May 5th – EOLIAN ISLANDS

After a leisurely breakfast we will take our minibus and head north about 50 km to the port of Milazzo. From Milazzo.

From Milazzo we take a full day private boat tour to the Eolian Islands of Vulcano and Lipari. Our course takes us sailing towards the Island of Vulcano and the tiny port of Gelso.

Sailing along the west coast of the island we can swim the blue waters of Venus Pool and visit the Cavallo Grotto. Lunch, and free time for visiting the village or enjoying the thermal waters and mud of the island (entrance not included).

After lunch we sail from Vulcano to the Island of Lipari.

Upon reaching Lipari, we navigate around the Faraglioni (rock stacks standing out of the sea) and travel along the island's west coast.

We can stop in Canneto for a swim and a visit to the famous pumice stone caves. Some free time to visit the small village and its archaeological and volcano museum before sailing back to Milazzo.

In the late afternoon we return to our base, our hotel in Taormina.

B,L

Hidden Jewels of Sicily and the Amalfi

16 Days / 15 Nights

May 4 -19, 2012



The Aeolian Islands

Day 3, Sunday May 6th – SIRACUSA

After breakfast our driver will meet us at the hotel and head south to Siracusa.

Ancient Siracusa (Syracuse) was founded by colonists from Cornith in 733 B.C. and was once the most important competitor to Athens.

We explore Ortigia (the ancient part of the town of Siracusa beautifully located on the sea). A visit to the Archaeological Park with its Greek Theatre, Roman Amphitheatre and Paradise Quarry is optional but well worth it if you have the energy.

This afternoon we enjoy a half day cooking class in Ortigia with dinner included.

Cooking is an art; especially Sicilian cooking and recipes from this region retain traces of many occupying civilizations including the Arabian, the Norman, the Angevin, the Aragonese, the Spanish and the Greek. They blend precious scents and flavours coming both from land and sea.

We learn from a true Sicilian the secrets of delicious dishes of this land (and sea) in an informal environment where with passion and cheerfulness she will show how to prepare some of the many Sicilian delicacies. Our reward is the enjoyment of dining on the fruits of our labour.

Dinner is served with Sicilian wine pairings and an informative overview of Sicilian wines given by a sommelier. A great introduction to the local wines we can enjoy during the tour.

B,D, Wine tastings

Hidden Jewels of Sicily and the Amalfi

16 Days / 15 Nights

May 4 -19, 2012

Day 4, Monday May 7th – RAGUSA and NOTO

Today is dedicated to visits of the beautiful Baroque towns of Ragusa-Ibla and Noto.

Following breakfast our driver will arrive at our hotel and drive us to Ragusa. Ragusa-Ibla is the oldest part of the city where most of the churches and Baroque buildings are found including the beautiful Cathedral of San Giorgio, Church of Santa Maria dell'Itria and the Church of San Giuseppe.

In the afternoon we drive to Noto, the most precious example of Baroque art in Sicily.

This little town is called a "Stone Garden" because of all the incredible decorations in the buildings. It is listed among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Our guide will guide us through the town and its attractions before leaving us time to explore further at our leisure.



Gelato or Granita?

Importantly we have time for our Sicilian ice-cream experience; both in Ragusa-Ibla and Noto we experience two of the best delicacies of Sicily: gelato and granita.

Locals eat ices all day long, often making breakfast out of dessert. It's not so surprising, then, that some claim ice cream was born on the island, a direct descendant of sarbat/sherbet, a fruit-syrup-and-water mix brought here by Arab merchants and invaders in the eighth century, cooled with snow from Mount Etna.

Sicilians divide ice cream, or ices, into two main categories: the slushy, water-based granita, flavoured with island classics like almond or lemon; and gelato, which has a silky, creamy texture thanks to the inclusion of eggs, milk or a starchy emulsifying base, and is preferably made with Sicily's native carob bean.

We stop in two of the best Gelaterie (ice-cream shops) in the whole of Sicily, one in Ragusa-Ibla and one in Noto, so that we can try both gelato and granite. Explore the different tastes and compare the different products in order to accomplish the impossible ... deciding which one is the best they are all buonissime!!

B, Gelato & Granite

Hidden Jewels of Sicily and the Amalfi

16 Days / 15 Nights

May 4 -19, 2012

Day 5, Tuesday May 8th – PIAZZA ARMERINA

This morning we drive west through the interior of Sicily to reach Piazza Armerina where we visit the archaeological site of the Villa Romana del Casale. The amazing mosaics discovered here have been recognized as a Unesco Human Heritage site and literally leave you breathless.

We see evidence of many of the invaders and rulers of Sicily during our tour, including the Romans; and this Roman Villa and its mosaics stand out as not only the best in Italy but in the whole world.

Following our visit of the villa we make our way back to Siracusa. Perhaps a stop along the way for a light-lunch in a typical Sicilian restaurant.

B,L



The wonderful mosaics of Villa Romana del Casale

Day 6, Wednesday May 9th – AGRIGENTO

Today we travel to Marsala on the western tip of Sicily.

We say goodbye to Siracusa and travel to the incredible Agrigento and the Valle Dei Templi (Valley of the temples) with the finest of all ancient Greek sites.

Our specialist local guide will explain the region's rich history from its ancient Greek heyday, its wars with Carthage and Rome, its Olympic successes and its many magnificent temples.



Temple of Concord - Agrigento

Leaving Agrigento we stop for a light lunch before the trip to Marsala. Later in the day we are ready to enjoy a quiet evening in our beautiful hotel right in the heart of Marsala.

B,L

Hidden Jewels of Sicily and the Amalfi

16 Days / 15 Nights

May 4 -19, 2012

Day 7, Thursday May 10th – MARSALA

Today we explore Marsala.

Marsala is the most famous wine region in Sicily and a name that even non wine drinkers know. We visit a local winery's cellar and taste Sicilian wines. Afterwards we travel between Trapani and Marsala on the western reaches of Sicily, known as the Salt Way Road. A visit to the historic salt pan works to explain the ancient tradition of harvesting salt from the sea, a practice which although ancient is still employed today.

This afternoon free for individual adventures. Maybe further wine tastings in different wineries or discovering the town of Marsala on your own.

We enjoy a special experience for dinner tonight as we sample the typical local dish Cous-cous. This is a food heritage clearly left by the Arab dominators of the island. The dish is now so deeply rooted in the Sicilian food culture that every year they even dedicate to it a festival in San Vito Lo Capo not far from Marsala.

B,L,D, wine tastings



Marsala wine cellar

Day 8, Friday May 11th – ERICE and SEGESTA

This morning we leave our Marsala Hotel and travel east towards Palermo.

On route to Palermo (the capital of Sicily) we will visit the wonderful medieval town of Erice and the ancient town of Segesta. Both are on hilltops and both have their own old and new attractions. Specialist guides share with us the treasures of both sites.

The medieval town of Erice was settled as an important religious site associated with the goddess Venus. We wander through its ancient streets and visit some of the famous homemade pastry shops—world-famous for marzipan candies and other delicacies like almond and pistachio pastries.

And after a lovely Sicilian lunch we visit Segesta and one of the most beautiful Greek temples still existing. The temple is located on a hill surrounded by colourful and the richly perfumed, fragrant vegetation of Sicily.

In the afternoon we arrive at our beautiful Palermo hotel and enjoy an evening at leisure.

B,L

Hidden Jewels of Sicily and the Amalfi

16 Days / 15 Nights

May 4 -19, 2012



Pastries - Erice and Temples - Segesta

Day 9, Saturday May 12th – PALERMO

During the morning we explore "Hidden Palermo" and discover the real heart of this amazing city including a visit to the colourful and picturesque open air food market of "la vucciria", "ballarò" or "capo" . Let's try the delicious typical Sicilian finger food: arancine, pane con panelle, etc.

B



Food Markets Palermo

Day 10, Sunday May 13th – PALERMO and MONREALE

Our day begins with a short drive to Monreale to admire its famous Duomo. This Cathedral started construction in 1174 by William II, where the Arab-Norman art and architecture reached the pinnacle of its glory. William II was a Norman King of Sicily from 1166 (100 years after the Norman conquest of Britain) to 1189 and he continued the ambitions in the east through campaigns, assimilation and construction of great building such as the duomo.

The interior represents scenes from the Old and New Testaments all in golden mosaics.

Palermo is a wondrous city and we have time this afternoon to explore it further at our leisure. Or sit in a café and watch others doing the same.

B

Hidden Jewels of Sicily and the Amalfi

16 Days / 15 Nights

May 4 -19, 2012

Day 11, Monday May 14th – PALERMO to AMALFI COAST

Today we leave our Palermo home and make our way to the Palermo airport for the transfer to Naples and our Amalfi experience.

Sicily has been a wonderful experience and although it is sad to say goodbye we are richer for our time here and looking forward to new adventures.

At Naples we are taken by private minibus from the airport to our home for the next 5 days, Positano.

On arrival in our beautiful well positioned hotel we have the afternoon at leisure to relax or start exploring the village of Positano with its pink and fuchsia houses, flowering bougainvillea and picturesque squares. It is love at first sight as we stroll along the lively streets, visiting local shops, amongst the colours and scents of this incredible land.

B



The Amalfi Coast - Positano

Day 12, Tuesday May 15th – AMALFI COAST

Following a relaxing evening we are ready for a full day exploring the marvels of the Amalfi Coast. Our private excursion of the Coast in our minibus takes us along the breathtaking scenic Amalfi Drive. We visit Amalfi, its lively and colourful alleyways, its lemon trees, and its gorgeous Cathedral. We stroll through vibrant streets, local shops, among the colours and scents of this incredible land.

We may want to enjoy lunch in Amalfi, where the local restaurants serve amazing Fish Pasta! We can visit Ravello, with its breathtaking view of the whole Gulf (from the famous "infinity Terrace"), its elegant villas and gardens.

We will visit a producer of the famous Limoncello liqueur: walking through a lemon tree plantation, visiting the workshop where the liqueur is produced (from those very same lemons), and of course .. tasting this sweet and delicious liqueur.

B

Hidden Jewels of Sicily and the Amalfi

16 Days / 15 Nights

May 4 -19, 2012



The Lemons of the Amalfi Coast

Day 13, Wednesday May 16th – POMPEII & HERCULANEUM

This morning we visit Pompeii and Herculaneum; two famous Archaeological sites. The city of Pompeii, before the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D., was an important commercial centre. The fury of Mount Vesuvius buried the entire city under a layer of burning ashes: thus, today, almost 2000 years later, we can rediscover the undisturbed city and life in those times.

Departing from the Piazza del Foro, formerly the thriving centre of the life of Pompeii, our expert guide takes us through the ancient Temples, Thermal baths, the Market and the majestic Theatre. We can admire some of the most outstanding houses of the Roman aristocrats and their beautiful frescos.

Perhaps lunch in a typical restaurant on Mount Vesuvius?

Herculaneum was founded by Hercules. It was located in a site which ensured that it overlooked one of the most unique panoramas in the world, a grandiose natural arc.

We visit the archaeological digs the new Virtual Archaeological Museum (MAV) which has only recently opened. Via the virtual installations we will be able to relive the life and culture of the archaeological remains of the first Neapolitans and after the great eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D.

B,L



Herculaneum and Pompeii

Hidden Jewels of Sicily and the Amalfi

16 Days / 15 Nights

May 4 -19, 2012

Day 14, Thursday May 17th – CAPRI

Another wonderful day is planned for today with a full day boat excursion to Capri.

Capri is the island in the gulf of Naples much loved by intellectuals, artists and writers, all captured by its magical beauty. Our private boat will pick us up at the harbour of Positano, heading out along the peninsula and then to Capri. This is a private full day excursion with private boat with captain and guide.

After a pleasant 30 minute cruise, we reach the beautiful Island of Capri: it is time for a tour of the island by water. We will visit several of the grottoes and stunning rock formations that dot the coastline, including the famed "Blue Grotto", the former pleasure pool of the Roman Emperor Tiberius. We may have time for a swim in one of the island's many inlets before our short guided visit.

On board we enjoy a light lunch and on to the island's port at Marina Grande where we have a few hours of exploration at leisure. Our captain will provide maps of the island, as well as information about the "must-see" stops to visit (the famous via Krupp, the Fortini (little forts) trails. Maybe we can have an ice cream or coffee at the famous "Piazzetta" or some shopping and relaxation before heading back by boat to Sorrento.

B,L

Day 15, Friday May 18th – PAESTUM

Following breakfast we have a real treat as we travel to a Mozzarella cheese farm/laboratory.

Here we will see how buffaloes are taken care of, milked and how the milk is transformed into the best mozzarella cheese of whole Italy. The visit will end with lunch and a tasting of the renowned Bufala Mozzarella, a recognised symbol of excellence and quality.

We have a change of pace as we travel to the wonderful Paestum for a visit to the archaeological UNESCO Heritage site. Paestum is an ancient city of Magna Graecia, which preserves superb examples of Greek temples, in Doric and Ionic styles. Paestum was always a stop for the young nobles in the 18th century on their grand tour as for many this was their first exposure to a real and ancient Greek temple.

After lunch we return to Positano for a relaxing afternoon on a beautiful coast.

B,L, Cheese tasting



Temple - Paestum

Hidden Jewels of Sicily and the Amalfi

16 Days / 15 Nights

May 4 -19, 2012

Day 16, Saturday May 19th – AMALFI COAST to ROME: ROYAL PALACE OF CASERTA

Today we will say farewell to the Amalfi coast and drive north towards Rome. On our way we will stop for a private guided tour at the intriguing and magnificent Royal Palace in Caserta.

As in the 18th century during the rule of the King of Naples, we will be astonished by the beauty and size of Caserta. In 1750, King Carlo di Borbone decided to provide a respectable seat to represent the government of the capital, Naples and his kingdom, and ordered the construction of a Royal Palace in order to rival the greatest European cities.

The complex was entrusted to the great architect Vanvitelli, who designed a majestic palace, externally austere but internally beautiful, surrounded by a garden with its scenographic fountains.

We will have a couple of hours to visit the Palace and its Italian Style Gardens. At the magnificent Scalone d'Onore staircase, the guide takes us through the most beautiful rooms of the palace, richly frescoed and decorated. Outside, we can admire a succession of magnificent fountains, adorned with sculptures and mythological characters, arranged along terraces descending with a wonderful perspective setting which continues up until the "great waterfall". (Trivia fans will understand why this palace with its opulence was used in two of the Star Wars movies).

Once our visit to the Royal Palace is over there is time to enjoy our last lunch together before our drive back to Rome and goodbyes.

Time to discuss our adventures together as we each move on to new adventures.

B,L



Royal Palace – Caserta

Hidden Jewels of Sicily and the Amalfi

16 Days / 15 Nights

May 4 -19, 2012

Abbreviations

B Breakfast
L Lunch
D Dinner

When the above abbreviations follow the Itinerary Description it denotes that these meals are included in the cost of the Tour.

Tour Options

Option 1:

This tour can be taken as a the complete 16 day tour from Rome - Sicily - Positano – Rome

Option 2:

11 Day Sicily only tour: Rome – Sicily – Rome

Option 3:

6 Day Positano and Amalfi tour: Rome – Positano - Rome

Enquiries	enquiry@traveljourneys.com.au
Departs	Rome. Option 1 & 2, departs 4 th May 2012 Option 3 departs 14 th May 2012
Finishes:	Rome. Option 1, Finishes 19 th May, 2012. Option 2, Finishes 14 th May 2012. Option 3, Finishes 19 th May 2012.
Group Size:	Costs are based on minimum of 9
	Accommodation is 3.5 and 4 stars
Pricing	Option 1: 16 days Sicily & the Amalfi Coast - \$7,990 per person share twin basis or \$9,590 for a single. Option 2: 11 days Sicily ex Rome - \$4,995 per person share twin basis or \$6,100 for a single. Option 3: 6 days The Amalfi Coast ex Rome - \$3,200 per person share twin basis or \$3,900 for a single. All prices are in Australian Dollars..

Hidden Jewels of Sicily and the Amalfi

16 Days / 15 Nights

May 4 -19, 2012

Tour Inclusions

Meals	All Breakfasts, 9 Lunches, 2 Dinners.
Services	Australian Tour Manager. English speaking Local specialist guides.
Transport	Italian Driver, Air Conditioned Mini coach Flights: Rome / Sicily / Naples
Fees	Daily Excursions and Tours Entrance Fees while with guides Cooking Class, wine & cheese tastings <u>All of the above - as per Itinerary.</u>
Cost	Based on Share Twin/Double room Single supplement on request subject to availability of rooms.

Tour Exclusions

Meals	Other than those listed in Itinerary
Tips	It is custom to tip both the Guide and the Driver. Guidelines will be advised with departure documents.
Airfares	All airfares other than those listed under Inclusions.
Option	Please ask us about airfares from Australia and stopover ideas.
Misc.	Items of a personal nature such as laundry, dry cleaning, personal accident and medical expenses, incidental expenses, taxi fares where not part of a regular transfer, telephone and internet communication charges, excess baggage.