



GT Experiences

A REALM OF UNFORGETTABLE TRAVEL

The background image shows a scenic view of a Sicilian town, likely Taormina, with colorful buildings and a prominent mountain in the distance. In the foreground, there are ancient ruins, including several standing columns and brick walls, bathed in warm, golden light. The sky is blue with some clouds.

SICILY

The Fire, The Fate, The Wonder



Catania

SICILY - THE FIRE, THE FATE, THE WONDER

8 DAYS/7 NIGHTS

Catania, Castelmola, Taormina, Noto, Marzamemi, Portopalo, (or Vendicari, Pantalica), Scicli, Ragusa Ibla, Modica, Caltagirone, Piazza Armerina, Agrigento - Valley of Temples, Stair of the Turks, Sutura

TOUR FEATURES

Sicily, a wonderful land! In this tour we will visit the most beautiful places in the eastern part of Sicily, full of marvellous landscapes.

We will discover the baroque pearls of Sicily, as Catania, Modica, the ancient and unique temples of Magna Grecia in Agrigento and wonderful settings, including Mount Etna (Volcano).

ITINERARY

Day 1

Arrival at the airport of Catania Fontanarossa. Transfer to by GT coach to Catania area and accommodation in hotel 4*. Dinner and overnight. **(D)**

Day 2 Catania and the Baroque

After breakfast, depart for Catania. Catania offers such different landscapes concentrated in a single site. Located on the east coast, at the foot of Mount Etna (the highest active volcano in Europe) this wonderful city is crossed by an underground river, the Amenano. Piazza Duomo is the historical and artistic heart of Catania, here merges all the spirit of the baroque old town with beautiful buildings of the town hall and the palace of the Clerics that surround the famous obelisk with the elephant, symbol of the city. Via Etna is the main street that divides the city, here are the ruins of the ancient Catania. The Greek Roman Theater of the first century AD, built entirely of marble and lava stone, is one of the most fascinating attractions of the city's past. City sightseeing around Piazza Duomo, the Cathedral, the fish market, Castello

Orsini - external, house of the composer Vincenzo Bellini – external - the Church of San Francesco, Via Crociferi and the baroque churches, Palazzo of the University.

Winery Experience & Wine Tasting at the Mount Etna foot (Linguaglossa). You will be lead inside one of the most celebrated and highest regarded wineries of Etna, named "Italian Winery of the Year" by the prestigious wine guide Gambero Rosso and "Top 100 Winery" by the US magazine



Mt. Etna





CASTEMOLA

Wine & Spirits.

We propose you a guided visit of Monte Serra estate and vineyard, followed by a comprehensive tasting of the most representative wines produced in this winery: at the end of the visit you will be lead in a dedicated room, where you will have a delicious light lunch consisting of Sicilian bread, olive oil, homemade "bruschette", a selection of typical cheeses (such as fresh baked ricotta), Nébroidi salami, green and black olives, fresch cherry tomatoes from Pachino and sun-dried tomatoes. You will taste two fine wines under the guide of the resident sommelier. Return to your hotel for an overnight. **(B, HD, WT, L, D)**

Day 3 Cooking class and lunch at local restaurant in Castelmola

After breakfast depart for Castelmola. the natural terrace of Taormina. There is a charming old village called "the terrace of Taormina"... is Castelmola. In a typical Trattoria (Restaurant) in this wonderful village you will experience the old Sicilian cuisine, the result of passion and recipes that use only products strictly seasonal, natural

ingredients, with no preservatives and dyes, cooked as the Sicilian tradition teaches.

The experience will allow you to engage yourself in preparing some starters and a main course of traditional Sicilian cooking, under the careful and friendly guidance of the chef who will open the doors of his kingdom..its kitchen!

Furthermore, the location of the restaurant will allow you to enjoy a great view of the Calabrian coast, on the Ionian coast, Taormina and Giardini Naxos and the largest volcano in Europe: Etna. Wonderful Taormina and the beautiful village of Castelmola. The historic village of Taormina has medieval origin and is famous not only for its monuments, including the structure of its streets and its old doors. Taormina center is built around the Corso Umberto I, the main artery of the city, from which you can reach all points of interest. Today Taormina is a health and tourist resort of international renown. Over the centuries, Taormina has always been a major tourist destination for famous personalities like Wilhelm II of Germany, many writers like Goethe, Maupassant, DH Lawrence,



Sicilian Bread

A. France, Oscar Wilde, Brahms, designers like Dior, noblewomen as Florence Trevelyan, the German painter Geleng, the English General Nelson, directors like Michelangelo Antonioni and actress like Greta Garbo. In addition to the delightful old town, we will visit the Church of San Pancrazio, built on the ruins of the Temple of Serapis that keeps inside interesting works of art, the famous Greek Theatre, a majestic building of Hellenistic period completely rebuilt by the Romans, the Duomo St. Nicholas and the remains of the Castle. After the tour of Taormina you will be lead to Castelmola for a visit in this beautiful village. Natural balcony above Taormina, the medieval village of Castelmola as the vision comes into view, in a blaze of figs of India, the majestic Etna with countries clinging to





NOTO

its slopes, the Ionian coast, the Gulf of Gardens -Naxos, the Head of S. Alessio, the Strait of Messina and the Calabrian coast. It offers breathtaking views and important traces of a past rich in art, history and traditions, which still do not fail to fascinate. Return your hotel for an overnight. **(B, CL, L, WT, D)**

Day 4 Noto, the “baroque pearls” of Sicily
After breakfast depart for Noto. In the southeastern part of Sicily is one of the “baroque pearls” of the island. Thanks to the magnificence and the splendor of its churches and its palaces in the Baroque style, Noto was included by UNESCO as World Heritage sites. The delicacy of its architectural decorations earned her the Appel’s “garden of stone”. Noto was entirely built from 1693 after a disastrous earthquake had completely destroyed the ancient medieval Noto (now called ancient Noto, an archaeological site located a few kilometers from the modern center) and has for this a very dramatic and monumental appearance. Marzamemi & Portopalo, enchanting must-see places in the southern tip of Sicily.

In the extreme edge of Sicily’s south-eastern region are two places that still retain their charm of fishing villages. Marzamemi, a small town in the territory of Pachino (famous for cherry). The visit to the village, which focuses its beauty between the main street and the historical square, next to the old trap, will be followed by a tasting of products from processing of the tuna and the renowned Cherry. The tasting light lunch will be served at a typical shop of Sicilian culinary excellence where it will be also possible to buy delicious typical food. In the summer and spring time, the tasting of light lunch will be served on a terrace with stunning sea views.

Then we’ll move to Portopalo, through a spectacular scenic route, adjacent to the sea. You will admire the historic trap (the oldest in Europe), the castle of Tafuri and the island of Capopassero on the Pirates Bay.

Trekking experience in the Nature Reserve Wildlife Oasis Vendicari. The Nature Reserve Wildlife Oasis Vendicari is located in the province of Siracusa, exactly between Noto and Marzamemi. Inside the

reserve, the human history shows a long stay. There are several archaeological sites and architectural testimony to the life of man in these places since the Grecian era. You can in fact, find traces of tanks-deposit of an old



Marzamemi

factory for fish processing from Hellenistic era, alongside which has also discovered a small cemetery. The reserve is a coastal wetland of high biological value for the presence of different habitats: the rocky coast, sandy coast, Mediterranean, swamps (brackish and freshwater), salt marshes, scrubland and cultivated areas. **(B, L)**

Day 5 Olfactory guided journey among medicinal and aromatic herbs in a wonderful countryside location.





SCICLI

After breakfast at your hotel, enjoy a guided journey among medicinal and aromatic herbs in a wonderful countryside location - Show Cooking in exclusive area kitchen Garden and dinner or lunch with typical Sicilian culinary excellences. A hill between Sampieri, Cava d'Aliga Scicli and gently sloping to the sea is where the headquarters of a famous company that produces medical and aromatic herbs. A multisensory itinerary within the company, over the years become a reference point for chefs, gourmets and lovers of good food throughout Italy for 150 species grown and distributed. The path winds through dozens of spices, ornamental plants and herbs chosen for their uniqueness: the pineapple sage, stevia, lemon thyme,

geranium and orange mint bergamot are just some of the variety that you can experience. Smell, touch and in some cases surprisingly enjoy discovering new tastes filled with scientific information and pleasant anecdotes until the final stage in the Kitchen-garden. Here you will take part in a unique and fascinating show cooking after which you will taste dishes unique and infinite goodness.

Scicli, incredible mix of sacred and profane architecture. Beautiful per overlooking the sea of the southern coast of Sicily, Scicli is located at the confluence of three valleys (Val di Modica, Santa Maria la Nova and San Bartolomeo), known locally as Cave. The nature of the place is characterized by a rocky landscape, full of caves, which has greatly favored the human presence in these places since prehistoric times, as evidenced by the findings of Grotta Maggiore, to reach Greek and Byzantine age, which remains significant vestiges. It's sure that Scicli enjoyed a rich and strong history in both age Arab and Norman. The Baroque, which has in Scicli some of its best fruits, gave the city the

privilege of being entered in the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The art of Scicli reaches the greatest expressions in the architecture of its civil buildings and peculiarly in the religious architectures. Ragusa Ibla: maximum expression of Baroque Ibleo & UNESCO World Heritage. Anyone who decides to visit the beautiful city of Ragusa, located in Val di Noto, is greeted by a great culture: ancient churches, historical works of art, picturesque lanes and a plethora of baroque architecture, like no other in Italy. Landscapes, traditions, sea, history make it extraordinarily fascinating. Surrounded by a chain of green hills and crossed by the river Irmínio, the city is divided between the top modern and the bottom side, called Ragusa Ibla, risen from the ruins of the ancient city and rebuilt after the earthquake of 1693, according to the ancient medieval structure. The Ibla, historic old town, offers over fifty churches and noble palaces. Nestled in the hillside, the small village overlooking the surrounding valley, with its small houses and narrow streets on which reigns the majestic Cathedral of St. George, the maximum expression of the Baroque Ibleo. Among the pearls stored



Ragusa Ibla





Modica

in its territory we find the Castle of Donna Fugata (about 15 km from Ragusa). Contrary to what the name might suggest it is not a real medieval castle but a sumptuous noble residence of the late '800. The city was declared a Unesco World Heritage as valuable evidence of Baroque art. Modica and the late Baroque: a UNESCO World Heritage overflowing with Baroque forms, nestled between the slopes of four hills, Modica is twisted and sensual, picturesque like few other cities of Sicily. It is located in the Val di Noto, including the Monti Iblei in the southernmost tip of Sicily. A little further south, there are long beaches of shallow and sandy Marina di Modica: its small bay is a favorite destination for surfers from all over Italy. This lovely town is divided into two parts, Modica Alta, with its narrow houses, churches and baroque buildings that climb the hills, and Modica Bassa, cut by Corso Umberto, the main street. They are joined by the imposing staircase leading to the Cathedral of St. George, symbol of Sicilian Baroque built according to an impressive facility that spectacular jaw-dropping town attracts thousands of tourists. Since 2001, Modica was included in the list of World Heritage Sites. Lunch at typical restaurant in the baroque heart of Ragusa Ibla In the baroque heart of Ragusa, the restaurant that welcomes you will show a unique atmosphere, where you can find the flavors of the past with the guarantee of an experienced chef and genuine products. Housed in an old palace, adjacent to the ancient site of St. George, the restaurant serves authentic local tradition,

cooked with care and passion. The stone walls adorned with tapestries and medieval weapons, make them a very picturesque, ideal to enjoy all the local cuisine, with a wide choice of dishes based on fish. The large garden, adjacent to the Villa in baroque style are the perfect setting where the beauty of the place combined with the qualities of a natural cuisine, genuine and authentic, made of flavors that are rooted in the tradition and history of Sicily. Return to your hotel for an overnight. **(B, L, D)**

Day 6 Visit of a winery in Caltagirone with light lunch: tasting of DOCG and DOC wines and typical products

After breakfast, depart for Caltagirone, famous for centuries for the production of ceramics and also a land of production of fine wines appreciated all over the world. A visit to one of the best wineries in the area is a must. The company we visit is very careful to respect the environment, because all the choices are designed to ensure a low environmental impact and a minimum energy consumption. Photovoltaic panels, natural system conditioning, solar thermal system, processing waste water treatment are some of the tricks used. Among the most important wines produced here are Cerasuolo di Vittoria, the only Sicilian wine that is recognized DOCG, DOC Frappato Vittoria and Nero D'Avola DOC Vittoria. The visit will start from the vines, if weather permits, to the cellar where an expert will show you various winemaking processes. The experience will end with a tasting of DOC and DOCG wines produced in the company combined with typical products. Shopping in a store of Sicilian excellences and tasting of typical food.

A very characteristic Sicilian shop in the historical centre of Piazza Armerina will welcome you to reveal ancient art and tastes of Sicily. You will enjoy genuine flavors and delicate fragrances of local

products. Pistachio creams, cheese, nougat, marzipan, cold cuts, chocolates from Modica, organic almonds, extra virgin organic olive oil, almonds wine and wine liquor Zibibbo are just some of the delicacies you will taste. In addition to the culinary tradition you will appreciate typical art pottery of Sicily and if you wish, buy beautiful souvenirs.



Colored ceramic vases from Caltagirone

Caltagirone is known worldwide for its ceramic art. The land is rich in clay and one of the pearls of the Baroque of the Val di Noto, the ancient origins of the first ovens date back, in fact, to the Muslim period and the Normans and testify of a task that has never been extinguished over the centuries. Numerous shops animate the streets of the city by exposing the typical products of this ancient art: tiles, candlesticks, plates, vases, etc. Among the other interesting sites, rise the churches, the baroque towers and the beautiful Town Park, one of the most elegant gardens of Italy, built in 800 by Giovanni Battista Filippo Basile. Traditionally the element of greatest tourist attraction for the city is the impressive staircase: 140 steps that connect the high city to the lower part. The staircase was built by Giuseppe Giacalone at the beginning of '600 and in 1954 the risers of each step were coated with majolica tiles, in a riot of geometric, anthropomorphic and phytomorphic features.

We will visit the park of the city, Ceramic Museum, Bridge of San Francesco decorated with beautiful ceramics, the



former prison of the Bourbons - external, Town Hall Square, Staircase of Santa Maria del Monte, Civic Gallery of Contemporary Art, tour among the shops of ceramics, Roman Villa del Casale: a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Roman Villa del Casale of Piazza Armerina is the most impressive building of Roman age in Sicily. It's a sumptuous villa of the late empire period, incredibly well preserved. The villa has 40 rooms and is 3500 square meters wide. Inside is an impressive sequence of ancient columns, remains of frescoes, statues and, above all, mosaics.

Thanks to a sophisticated platform system it's possible, for visitors, to see every part of the villa: the *termae*, the peristyle, the basilica and the private rooms. The Roman Villa del Casale is one of the Sicilian monuments in UNESCO's world heritage list. The villa was built during the late Roman Empire (4th century AD) over an existent building. It belonged to an important member of the aristocracy, maybe a relative of the emperor. In the last years the villa was carefully restored and from the year 2012 it's again completely open to visitors. **(WT, D)**



Piazza Armerina - Roman Villa del Casale

Day 7 Visit a dairy farm

Breakfast at your hotel. Depart for the farm in Cammarata. With its 60 years of activity, the farm we'll visit embodies a wealth of experience that has managed to pass with passion from fathers to sons. The farm is located in Cammarata, a small mountain town in the heart of Sicily, known for its historic center of Arab origin and the renowned food and wine. The dairy processes the milk from their own herd of Italian brown cows, producing handmade string cheese such as *caciotta*, *caciocavallo*, *caciotta* smoked and *mozzarella* and soft cheeses such as *Tomello* and the *Fior di Pepe* and also tasty dairy products like cottage cheese, yogurt and cream cheese. All it made with care and attention to quality that consumers deserve.

Within this magnificent setting, at the end of the visit in the company, you will expect a tasty lunch with delicious cheese produced on the farm and other typical excellent food of the territory.

Onward to Sutera, the balcony of Sicily. On the slopes of Mount San Paolino,



Italian Cheese Maker

a chalky cliff in the valley of the river Platani, lies Sutera, a small agricultural borgo inhabited by about 1500 people. The town of medieval origins is inserted in an area of great interest and appeal. Sutera and its territory was inhabited since prehistoric times by indigenous peoples, as reflected in the many caves scattered throughout the territory and its history is closely linked with that of Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, until Muslims and Normans, who left here important evidences of their passage. The small borgo, with its houses piled one upon the other, in the middle of a maze of narrow streets in lava and limestone, it has maintained its medieval structure. The oldest part of the town is the district of Rabato, reminiscences of ancient Arabian, a characteristic extricate of narrow winding cobbled streets, overlooked by the houses in chalk. **(B, D, CT)**

Day 7 Ciao Italy

After breakfast, departure for the airport of Catania Fontanarossa. **(B)**



Aperitif di Italia





CASTLE OF DONNAFUGATA

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Round-trip airport to hotel transfers from and to Catania Fontanarossa airport
- Seven nights hotel accommodation 3 or 4* hotels
- Daily breakfast
- Three lunches
- Five dinners
- Half-day tour to Mt. Etna
- Guided winery tour with wine tasting
- Siteseeing of Taormina & Noto
- Visit of the ancient "tonnara" (trap) in Marzamemi
- Tasting with tuna and ciliegino tomatoe in a typical shop of culinary excellences with the possibility for shopping
- Visit Portopalo trap the oldest in Europe
- Visit castle Tafuri and the island of Capopassero
- Trekking excursion in the Nature Reserve Wildlife Oasis of Vendicari
- Siteseeing tour of Modica
- Visit of Donnafugata Castle

- Guided journey among medicinal and aromatic herbs in a wonderful countryside location
- Cooking in exclusive area kitchen Garden and dinner with typical Sicilian culinary excellences
- Visit of Caltagirone town and shopping tour
- Visit in a winery in Caltagirone with wine tasting
- Visit Villa Romana del Casale a UNESCO world heritage site
- Shopping in a store of Sicilian excellences and tasting of typical food
- Siteseeing tour of Valley of the Temples
- Visit Borgo in Sutera

NOT INCLUDED

- Car rental (this is available upon request)
- Car rental with chauffeur (available upon request)
- City tax to be paid directly in hotel
- Extra, tips and anything else not listed under "What's Included"

Legend

B	Breakfast
L	Lunch
D	Dinner
CL	Cooking Lesson
HD	Half-day tour
WT	Wine Tasting
CT	Cheese Tasting



OPTIONAL TOURS

BUFFET PICNIC IN THE GARDEN OF KOLIMBETHRA - FAI

Historic, nature and landscape heritage of great importance, the garden of Kolimbethra, a small valley in the heart of the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento, has been entrusted to the FAI in free concession from the Sicily Region for a period of 25 years. Authentic archaeological jewel and agriculture of the Valley of the Temples, came back to light after decades of neglect, it is an extraordinary garden for the magnificence of nature that is the ultimate expression of his generosity and wealth of archaeological remains that are still in the light. In this beautiful setting you will enjoy a moment of relax while enjoying a lunch tasting with typical products of the culinary culture of this wonderful land.

BOARDING THE ANCIENT GALLEON AND SAILING TO THE FAMOUS STAIRS OF THE TURKS

Aperitif, drink at sunset and typical dinner on board.

An unforgettable experience on board of the schooner Galleon of 1936 equipped with comfortable seating, cushions, poufs, sunbathing areas, shady spots, covered rooms and all necessary facilities.

The departure for the afternoon trip is at 05:00 p.m. from the port of San Leone. The first part of the day will include a sweet navigation of about one hour during which you can sunbathe and admire the play of colors of the coast that is unparalleled throughout the province, until we reach the famous Turkish Steps, a white rock strip that shines in the sunlight. Its white color and its undulating forms that enchant tourists from around the world for almost half a century or more, are the reason why this site soon will become patrimony of UNESCO.

Near the Turkish Steps we will stop for a refreshing swim. Meanwhile, our chef will prepare for you a drink and the dinner. At sunset we'll enjoy a fresh Prosecco wine accompanied by typical Sicilian appetizer consisting of slices of bread with marinated anchovies of Lampedusa, bluefin tuna and salmon from Trapani. Dinner includes a dish of pasta with pistachio pesto, shrimp and fresh chopped bitter almonds, with excellent white wine.

After dinner there is the magic moment of this afternoon excursion: surfing the night under the stars. On the way back you can see the lighted coast, wrapped in the silence of the night broken only by the whisper of the sea. The return to the port of San Leone is scheduled at about 09:30 p.m.

BOARDING THE ANCIENT GALLEON AND SAILING ALONG THE COAST OF AGRIGENTO TO THE FAMOUS STAIRS OF THE TURKS

Typical lunch/dinner on board

An unforgettable experience on board of a schooner Galleon of 1936 equipped with comfortable seating, cushions, poufs, sunbathing areas, shady spots, covered rooms and all necessary facilities. On board you will find surfboards, for those who have some difficulties to swim or want to sunbathe directly from the sea rocked by the waves, snorkeling equipment will be available for the adventurous who want to explore the wonders of the coast.

The excursion takes place along the coast of Agrigento between Punta Bianca, Scala dei Turchi and Capo Rossello, a very striking coastal for its beautiful beaches and clear sea that will excite feelings of peace and well-being.

The departure is at 10:00 a.m. from

the port of San Leone. The first part of the day will include a sweet navigation of about one hour during which you can sunbathe and admire the play of colors of the coast that is unparalleled throughout the province, until we reach the famous Turkish Steps, a white rock strip that shines in the sunlight. Its white color and its undulating forms that enchant tourists from around the world for almost half a century or more, are the reason why this site soon will become patrimony of UNESCO.

Immediately after the Turkish Steps there is Capo Rossello and Rocca Gucciarda where we will stop for a refreshing swim. Meanwhile, our chef will prepare for you lunch/dinner on board. After the bath, we'll enjoy a good dish of pasta with pistachio pesto, shrimp and fresh chopped bitter almonds, with excellent white wine. After lunch there will be some time to relax and enjoy the waves or swim in the blue sea, again directly from our boat. In the early afternoon we will be back to the harbor of San Leone.

EVENTS

ANGHIARI – Palio di Vittoria, June

It is one of the oldest of Tuscany Palios and you run walk from the site of the battle, the majesty of the Santa Maria Vittoria, to the square of the “market” (now Piazza Baldaccio Bruni), walk-ing and running in the street uphill called “the Cross”, by virtue of the church on the top linked to the paths of St. Francis in this valley.

POPPI (Badia Prataglia) - Mangialonga, August

Thanks to its culinary tradition, Badia Prataglia with all its “castles” offers a wonderful gourmet walk between stone houses and balconies fragrant. In ten stages you can taste the flavors of tradi-



tional dishes of Badian, including tortelli to the plate but also: cocktails, appetizers, polenta with wild boar sauce, roast pork, lemon sorbet, grilled meat, and sweets and wine at will.

POPPI - Il gusto dei Guidi, August
Exhibition of Tuscan Wines and traditional and organic products of Casentino.

POPPI (Moggiona) – Festival of the Porcino mushroom, August
The Porcini Mushroom Festival is the most important event organized in Moggiona. During the three days of the festival you can taste both lunch and dinner, many specialties porcini mushrooms.

SIENA – Palio, August
The Palio is not an event revived and organized for tourism: is the life of the people of Siena in time and in different aspects and feelings.
It has ancient origins with some regulations still valid since 1644, when it was over the first prize with horses, as well as still happens, in unbroken continuity. The territory of the City is divided into seventeen contrade with the boundaries established in 1729 by the Notice of Violante of Bavaria, Governor of the City.

AREZZO – Giostra del Saracino, June-September
The Giostra del Saracino is the main reenactment of the city of Arezzo. The event takes place twice a year: the second Saturday of June at night edition (Joust of San Donato) and the first Sunday of September edition daytime (Tournament of Our Lady of Consolation). The jousting tournament attracts thousands of visitors, fascinated by the historical procession, they poured into the city streets. Heatedly by hundreds of people in medieval costumes and dozens of horses, punctuated by the sound of trumpets and intoxicated color of

the flags, the procession is able to give life to the city back in time and to immerse tourists in Arezzo and atmosphere unique and festive.

POPPI (Stia In Casentino), Biennale europea d'arte fabbrile, September
With the aim to give the right visibility to this ancient but very current the European Biennial of Art Fabbrile of Stia, 3 to 6 September 2015 renews the appoint



4* HOTEL



LUXURY ANCIENT HERMITAGE



HISTORICAL HOUSE

