

Golden Sicily East to West (Taormina to Palermo) 2011

The island in the sun in 7 days (6 nights) with 4-star lodging

Our general tour page with frequently asked questions:

www.bestofsicily.com/sicilytours2005.htm

Reservation info, hotel details and departure dates follow the itinerary and summary. Visit our general tours page for faqs about our company and our tours. Important purchase conditions follow on this page.

Enjoy the timeless history, culture, cuisine and sunshine of Sicily in a tour (very) conveniently planned with just two hotel check-ins and a cross-island itinerary --instead of a lengthy "circuit" around the island with the same place as starting and ending point. Your delightful itinerary crosses Sicily from Taormina to Palermo, meaning that your arrival will be at Catania airport with a departure from Palermo. (For a similar tour, but with a "reversed" itinerary which takes you from west to east, we offer Golden Sicily West-to-East.) Departures throughout most of the year are guaranteed with as few as two participants. Yes, 27 departure dates! No other agency in Sicily offers so many throughout 11 months of the year. Group size is 2 to 24.



Itinerary:

(**Please note:** Summary follows. All breakfasts are included, other meals included are indicated in **bold face**.)

Monday: Independent arrival and check-in at Taormina from Catania airport. Day at leisure in this charming hilltop town, full of winding streets and enticing shops and restaurants, that make it a great place to spend a day indulging personal tastes and unexpected curiosities. Overnight at Taormina.

Tuesday: Breakfast followed by a full day at leisure. Optional excursion up the slopes toward the summit of Mount Etna, Sicily's highest mountain and Europe's largest active volcano. Another option is a cooking class. (See optional excursions below.) **Dinner** at a local restaurant, overnight in Taormina.

Wednesday: Breakfast is followed by an excursion down the Ionian coast to Siracusa (Syracuse), home of Archimedes and one of the most important cities of the ancient Greek world. First you'll explore the old city, the island of Ortygia, where we'll have **lunch**. In the

afternoon we'll discover the Syracuse archeological site. Return to Taormina for evening at leisure. Overnight in Taormina.

Thursday: Following **breakfast** and check-out, we embark upon a trip across Sicily's rugged interior. First, we visit Piazza Armerina's ancient Roman villa, well known for its mosaics. (This stop is subject to an extensive restoration which may close the site for several months.) En route to Agrigento, to visit its timeless Greek temples, we'll stop for a country **lunch**. Evening will find us in Palermo. Overnight in Palermo.

Friday: Following **breakfast** we'll venture into Sicily's wine region. We'll stop at Marsala, where we'll visit a winery and enjoy a wine tasting. The Trapani region is known for its salt pans (marshes) and wind mills. Following a **light lunch** at an olive farm, we'll visit hilltop Erice, a picturesque medieval town built upon much older Phoenician and Elymian ones. Overnight in Palermo.

Saturday: Following **breakfast**, we'll visit the Norman abbey of Monreale, overlooking the city, famous for its Byzantine mosaics and Norman-Arab cloister. Then we'll discover medieval Palermo with a visit to the city's medieval Cathedral and Martorana Church, the Baroque Quattro Canti, Piazza Pretoria and a street market. In mid-afternoon, following a lunchtime break, we'll travel along the coast to visit seaside Cefalù, famous for its medieval cathedral. Evening at leisure. Overnight in Palermo.

Sunday: Independent transfer to Palermo Airport.

Summary & Accommodation (lodging):

Prices: **€999.00** per person double occupancy (i.e. two persons per room), €1280.00 single occupancy, payable by bank wire transfer or major credit card. See our general tours page for purchase conditions and cancellation policies.

Includes: Six (6) nights accommodation in 4-star superior hotels listed here or the equivalent substitution (to be confirmed 20 days before beginning of your tour but usually Villa Diodoro, Miramare or Villa Angela in Taormina and the Plaza Opera or Principe Villafranca in Palermo which you can view here), transportation (coach or minibus) and tour escort for the entire trip, with all breakfasts, 1 dinner and 2 light lunches (beverages not included), 1 wine tasting, all taxes.

Does not include: Beverages, tips (gratuities) to escorts (or guides/drivers), airfare, meals not indicated, entrance fees at 6 archeological/historical sites (total approx. €50), trip insurance, airport transfers (may be purchased separately), portage and baggage handling, options, anything not mentioned under "Includes" above.

Accommodation: Double room with private bathroom. Single room with supplement ("single occupancy").

Guide/Escort Language: English.

Group Size: From 2 to 24 participants.

Dates offered: Departures from Taormina as indicated here. **No other agency in the world offers a Sicily tour with this frequency and number of departures!**

Tours begin on Monday at Taormina:

7 February, 7 March, 14 March, 4 April, 11 April, 18 April, 2 May, 9 May, 23 May, 30 May, 13 June, 20 June, 27 June, 11 July, 18 July, 25 July, 29 August, 5 September, 12 September, 19 September, 26 September, 10 October, 17 October, 24 October, 31 October, 7 November, 5 December.

Note major Italian legal holidays in 2011: 1 January, 6 January, 24 April (Easter), 25 April

(Easter Monday and Liberation Day), 1 May, 2 June, 15 August, 1 November, 8 December, 25 December, 26 December.

Reservations:

To reserve contact us at **historic-tour@bestofsicily.com** indicating "Golden CT" in the subject line, or by phone at +39 091 626 9685, or fax +39 091 380 9900. From the United States or Canada you may also contact us by **Skype** at 718-473-0803. (Please remember that there's a six-hour time difference between Central European Time here in Italy and American Eastern Time in Toronto and New York.) Or... you can pay online with a credit card (under "Notes" please indicate the tour, start date and number of participants). A 250 euro minimum deposit is required when you reserve.

This tour is organized by **Chat & Tour** (Tradizione Turismo), Via Gen. Sirtori 25, 90145 Palermo, Italy. Visit our general tours page for faqs and purchase conditions regarding this and other tours.

Optional Excursions:

This tour includes just about everything while allowing for free time and offering a few exceptional choices, yet without structuring the itinerary as a mere "frame" for a series of options and extra excursions. This tour has these options on Tuesday, with a choice of an excursion to the Mount Etna region and a cooking class in Taormina. This permits you to choose which one, if any, is best for you. (Or you might simply choose to relax, go to the beach or go shopping!) If you decide to participate in an excursion or cooking class, please mention this when you reserve your tour. Each presumes a minimum of two participants.

1) Etna Jeep Excursion & Country Lunch: You'll be taken by jeep to the higher altitude of the volcano slopes, including Fontana Peak the 'extinct' craters of the Sartorius Peaks and the lava flow from the 2002 eruption. Then you'll enjoy a light lunch at a farmhouse offering typical Sicilian cuisine. Returning to Taormina, the partially off-road drive will pass the Alcantara Gorge. **€120.00 per person.**

2) Market Gourmet Cooking Class: This is the epitome of food preparation from start to finish. Independent transfer to a local restaurant (near your hotel) where you'll be met by chefs Antonio Orlando and Maria. At an open-air market you'll select the fresh ingredients of your culinary creation --which (accompanied by the perfect wine) you'll enjoy as your lunch, followed by dessert. Preparing and tasting this piece of Sicily is an experience you'll never forget. The class runs from 9 AM to 1 PM (lunch time). **€90.00 per person**

Airport Transfers & Extra Nights:

Please mention these when you reserve your tour.

Airport Transfer: While there are buses, trains and taxis into Taormina and Palermo from Catania's and Palermo's airports, we can arrange a personalized transfer at **€70.00 per person** (based on a minimum of two passengers) from 8 AM to 7 PM, or **€90.00 per person** from 7:30 PM to 7:30 AM. Travel time in each case is approximately 40 minutes.

Pre Night in Taormina: A night (or more) immediately preceding the tour. Double occupancy (double or twin) **€120.00 per person**, Single occupancy **€195.00**. Whenever possible, lodging will be in the same hotel used during the tour.

Post Night in Palermo: A night (or more) immediately following the tour begins. Double occupancy (double or twin) **€70.00 per person**, Single occupancy **€99.00**. Whenever possible, lodging will be in the same hotel used during the tour.

Conditions and Terms for 2011 Tours

Client will be advised of specific hotels to be used in his/her tour 20 (twenty) days before the tour's start date. Payment may be effected by bank wire transfer or major credit card. Prices are

indicated in euros and valid through 31 December 2011. In the event of currency conversion to euros, the conversion rate shall be that of the day of payment; in the event of several payments for a single service the conversion rate may vary slightly based on the day's current exchange rate. All services are to be prepaid at least sixty days prior to the beginning of the tour ("start date" herein also referred to as the "departure"), with an initial payment or deposit (of at least 20% of the total cost) required to reserve a place in the tour, and in any event the balance or full price made payable within 60 (sixty) days of departure. In the event of cancellation by the client, the following portion of the total tour price will be claimed by the agency: €100.00 fixed fee 60+ days prior to departure, 25% 45-59 days before departure, 50% 15-44 days before departure, 80% 8-14 days before departure, 100% within 7 (seven) days of departure. At its discretion, the tour operator agency may waive such claims.

If purchased directly from the Italian tour operator (i.e. Tradizione Turismo by Chat & Tour Srl via this website, service shall be governed by the laws of the Italian Republic and the European Union. Local laws may also apply for any tour purchased through a travel agent outside Italy. It is the responsibility of each participant to be in possession of the necessary travel document, such as a valid passport. Basic services are insured in compliance with Italian law. Certain fees indicated (i.e. costs cited which are outside the actual tour price), particularly admission fees at archeological sites, are understood to be beyond the tour operator agency's control and therefore subject to change without notice.

Hotel ratings are those established by the Italian travel commission and may differ from those indicated in privately-published travel guide books or websites. Tours begin in Palermo or Taormina, as indicated, on the dates specified. Unless the tour is purchased by a travel agent representing us, billing is processed through the tour operator, based here in Palermo, Italy (i.e. Chat & Tour's **Tradizione Turismo**). In the event that the tour operator agency effects cancellation of a tour at any time prior to departure, its sole responsibility and liability is limited to refunding the client the amount it has received in payment for the tour up to that date. The tour operator reserves the right to cancel or reschedule any tour departure in accordance with operating requirements or circumstances beyond its control (force majeure).

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