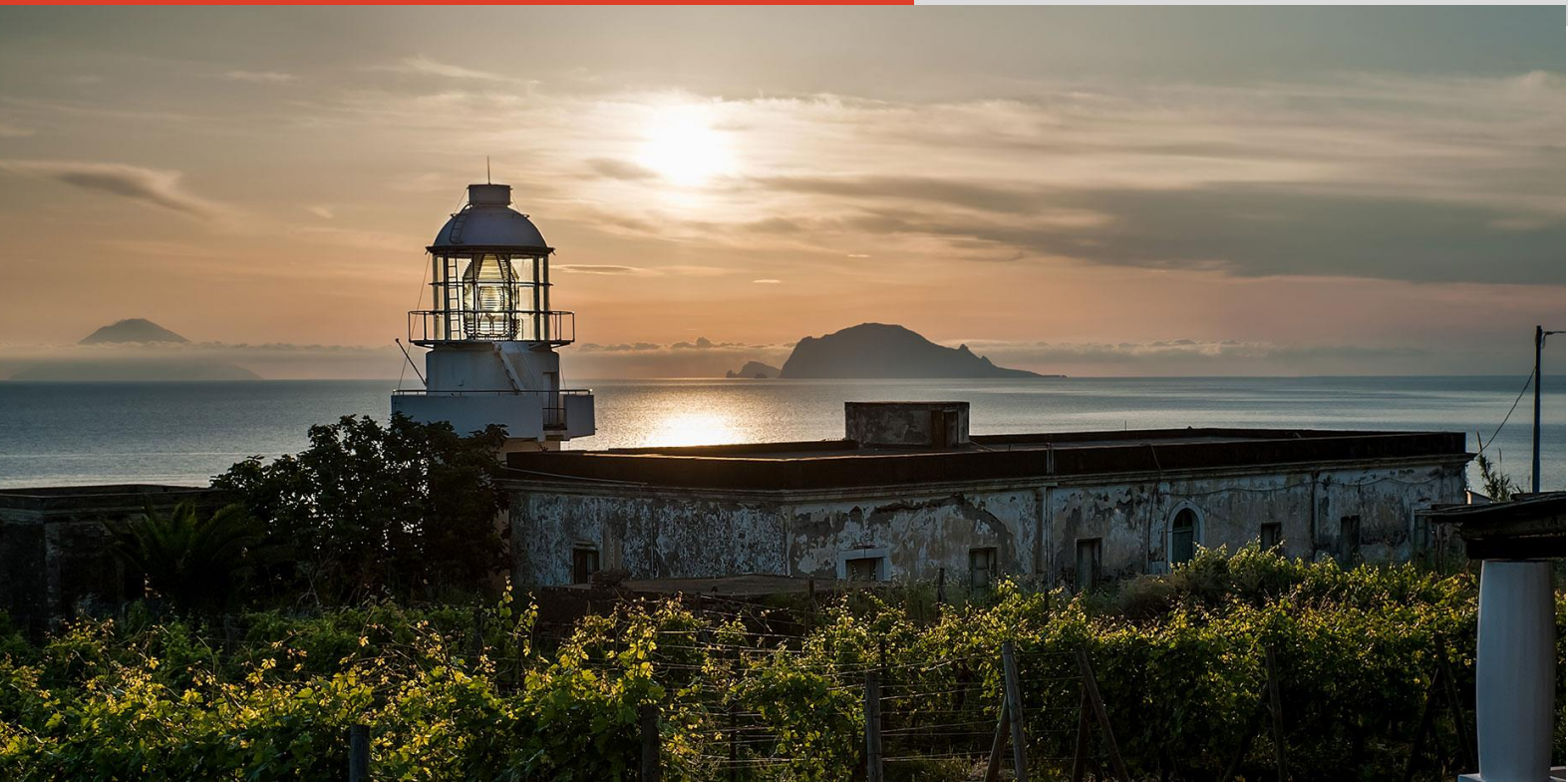


CHARMING SICILY & AEOLIAN ISLANDS TOUR
Especially designed for Travel Edge

AIRPORT ARR.
Palermo

AIRPORT DEP.
Catania



VIRTUOSO

PREFERRED ON-SITE



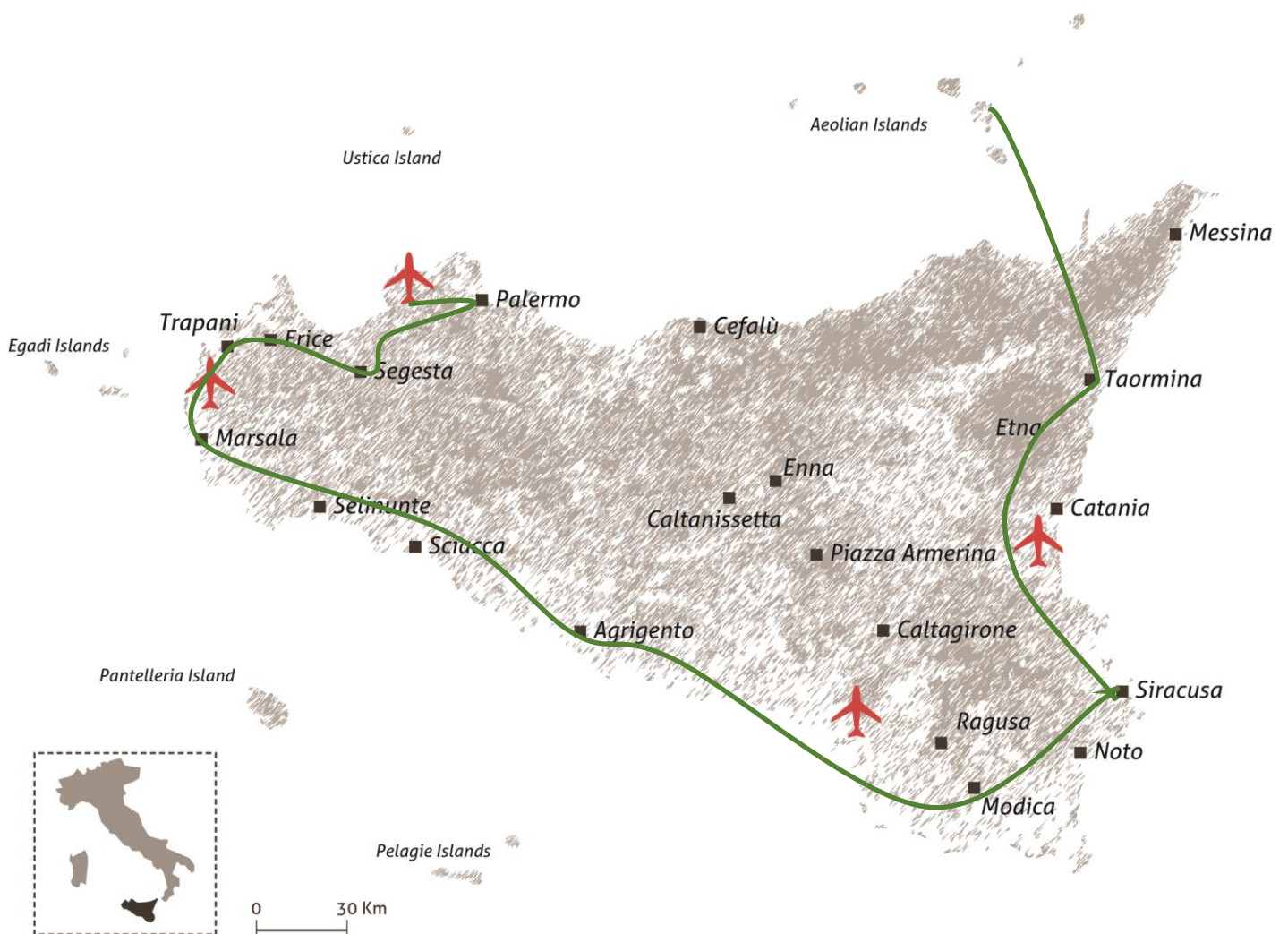
TRAVEL EDGE



ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS

- Palermo and Monreale
- Greek Temple of Segesta and medieval Town of Erice
- Picnic at the Valley of The Temples - UNESCO Heritage Site
- Visit the Shepherds in the Countryside
- Aeolian Islands - UNESCO Heritage Site
- Noto, Siracusa and Ortigia - UNESCO Heritage Site
- Taormina and Greek Theatre
- Etna Jeep Tour with lunch in exclusive Etna DOC Winery -- UNESCO Heritage Site

MAP OF SICILY



Day 1
Arrival Palermo

Upon arrival to Palermo Airport, meet your private English-speaking driver (who will be holding a sign with your name) at the arrivals hall (after passport control, baggage claim and customs), and be transferred to your hotel.

Accommodation:
PALERMO – 2 NIGHTS

Day 2
Palermo and Monreale
9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.8
8 hours Guided tour

Breakfast,
Lunch

Upon arrival to Palermo Airport, meet your private English-speaking driver (who will be holding a sign with your name) at the arrivals hall (after passport control, baggage claim and customs), and transfer to downtown where your private local guide is waiting for you to show the wonders of Palermo historical center.



Sitting at the crossroads of history, Sicily bears the mark of many world cultures and civilizations - join your expert local guide to witness that multicultural mix for yourself on this tour of **Palermo** and surroundings...

The itinerary begins with a morning visit of the **Capo market**, the oldest in Palermo, where you will see and taste famous Palermo **street food** such as "*panelle*", "*arancine*", "*crocchette*" and "*Pani ca Meusa*".

Admire colorful stalls featuring an abundance of fruit, vegetables, seafood and meats as the sellers' cry for our attention. Enjoy a street food tasting.

Then, visit Palermo old city that stretches along a beautiful bay on the Tyrrhenian Sea. Founded by the Phoenicians in the VIIth and VIIIth centuries B.C., the city was conquered by Arabs in 831, and a period of immense prosperity began. Continue your walking tour along the city center. You will be enchanted by the city's wide boulevards, traditional Sicilian Old Quarter, and baroque palaces. The true center of Palermo is the '**Quattro Canti**', the intersection of the city's two main thoroughfares, and the nearby Cathedral is a building at the intersection of centuries of architectural styles. Serving as a basilica, a cathedral and a Muslim mosque, the architectural details of this fascinating building reveal its rich history. In **Piazza Pretoria**, stop to admire the risqué Renaissance-era '**Fountain of Shame**' that was banished to Palermo from faraway Tuscany.

Stop for a traditional lunch of Sicilian specialties at **Antica Focacceria San Francesco** (included).

Then join your driver for the leisurely drive through the Conca D'oro valley up to **Monreale**.

The cathedral and its Benedictine monastery was founded in 1172 by the Norman King William II and provides a typical Sicilian fusion of architectural styles: Byzantine mosaics, Arab-inspired ornamental floors and a magnificent cloister flanked by a series of unique, decorative columns. You will Also discover the Arab-Norman splendor of the Duomo. This nearby treasure dates back from the 12th century and shows the diverse architectural influences of both the Normans and the Arab population. Dinner at leisure. Return to your hotel and overnight stay.

Day 3

Segesta, Erice and Salt Pans

9.30 a.m. / 5.30 p.m.

With 5 Hours Guided tour

Breakfast, Pastry
Tasting

Breakfast in hotel and check out. Pick up by your private driver and leave to **Segesta** where you will meet your guide, for a guided tour of the Temple and the Theatre.

Next stop **Erice**, a wonderfully preserved mediaeval hill town at the extreme north-west corner of Sicily, on the top of Monte San Giuliano.



The town overlooks the city of Trapani and the lower western coast towards the Egadi Islands, where sea salt is made, offering a most breathtaking view.

On a clear day, you can see the African coast. You will visit the Norman Castle and the Duomo as you walk through the cobble-stoned streets of the town, taking in the fresh air and a variety of aromas emanating from the numerous pastry shops for which Erice is known.

In fact, you will stop to visit **Maria Grammatico's Pastry Shop** to see and taste the variety of sweets she lovingly creates. You will drive and admire the salt pans along the salt road between Trapani and Marsala before to arrive at your hotel in Agrigento.

Accommodation:
AGRIGENTO

2 nights

Day 4

The True Sicily and Pizza making!

9.30 a.m. / 3.30 p.m.

6 Hours Guided tour

Breakfast, Lunch
and Tastings



Breakfast in hotel.

Pick up in hotel by your English speaking driver guide. Today, you will visit one of the most typical village of the **Agrigento** Province, in the ancient heart of Sicily, at the gates of the Sican Mountains. **Sant'Angelo Muxaro** rises in the place that saw the epos of the **Sican King Kokalos**, in a secret and ancient land, far from the touristic areas, on a hill over the Valley of the Platani river. Along the town's lanes and courtyards, you can enjoy the sight of the wild and luxuriant countryside. The first kilometers will take you into a natural path leading to the characteristic hill of Sant'Angelo.

You will continue this scenic route until the archaeological area, where you will visit tombs and recent diggings. Along the way, you will see almond, pistachio and olive trees.

At about 270 meters, you will stop at the Tholos tomb, also known as The Tomb of the Prince. This whole area is connected with the myth of Daedalus and Icarus as well as the Minotaur labyrinth. Our guide will then take you to a bakery to taste biscuits and homemade cookies. Then, you will visit a shepherd's house to taste soft pecorino cheese and ricotta cheese, fresh and still warm. Finally reach on old bakery where you will learn how to prepare Sicilian bread and pizza (sfincione) with traditional ingredients like pecorino cheese, olive oil and sardines.



For lunch, pizza and hot bread with olive oil and oregano will be served. This walking itinerary really takes you far from the classic tourist routes. Return at the resort and afternoon at leisure.

Lunch can be arranged at the Bakery or at Aldo's home as below

THE PLANT WHISPERER (same price)

Here we meet Aldo, considered the last Sicilian native seed keeper.

A whole life dedicated to plant care, the creation of essences and oils from them for various uses.

It will be a stimulating day that gives you the opportunity to discover smells and sensations never witnessed, immersed in his enchanting garden overlooking the Platani River valley.

We will have lunch with local products and fruits coming from Aldo's fields: flower salads, caper and olive pestos, cheese and bread made with ancient grain, colorful seasonal flowers in a sauce made of olive oil and herbs.



Day 5

Valley of The Temples and Kolymbetra Garden – Noto

9.00 a.m. / 5.30 p.m.

With 4 Hours Guided tour

Breakfast, Picnic
lunch

Breakfast in hotel and check out.

Pick up by your English-speaking driver and drive to **Agrigento** to visit the wonderful **Valley of Temples**. As one of the premier Italian destinations, it is easy to forget that Sicily was once a thriving Greek colony. Once in Agrigento join your expert local guide to explore one of the best-preserved relics of the island's 'Magna Graecia'...



As English author and historian Douglas Sladen once said, "If you want to understand ancient Greece, come to Sicily." Indeed, history tells us that there were once more Greeks living in the colonies of southern Italy and Sicily known as Magna Graecia than there were Greeks actually living in Greece. Meet our expert local guide at The Valley of the Temples to tour one of Magna Graecia's best preserved temple complexes, and enjoy an in-depth exploration of the complex. You'll hear the amazing story these eight temples tell: from the almost entirely intact Temple of Concordia to the Temple of Hera that suffered in a medieval earthquake and from the Temple of Juno

on its hilltop perch to the unfortunate Temple of Zeus, dismantled by greedy builders over the centuries for its stones. Pic nic lunch will be served at the **Kolymbetra Garden** inside the Valley of the Temples, that was an old Greek water reservoir.



Originally, this garden was an exquisite artificial lake, surrounded by beautiful plants and flowers. It was not only used as a water reserve for the city, but also a place for people to sit and contemplate.

Today, the Kolymbetra Garden, represents an enchanting concentration of the ancient agricultural and natural landscapes of Southern Sicily.

Thanks to the restoration of the garden, visitors are able to explore the Mediterranean shrubs rich in pistachio, broom, myrtle, tamerix, citrus, ancient varieties of lemon, orange and mandarine, which are

irrigated using a system based on that realized by the ancient Arabs.

After lunch move to Noto or Siracusa and accommodation at your hotel

Accommodation:
SIRACUSA OR NOTO

3 nights

Day 6
Noto and Siracusa
9.30 a.m. / 5.30 p.m.
8 Hours Guided tour

Breakfast, Ice
Cream Tasting,
Light Lunch

Breakfast in hotel. Today enjoy a wonderful introduction of **Noto and Siracusa** with a private guide and driver.

Start with a wonderful town of **Noto**, a Baroque masterpiece in the province of Siracusa. Such is the town's beauty that it has been awarded status as Cultural Patrimony of Humanity by Unesco. A powerful earthquake completely destroyed the town in 1693, leading to Noto being rebuilt in sumptuous Baroque style. According to your expert driver suggestions, stroll through the city: grandiose flights of steps lead worshippers and tourists alike up to the ornately carved entrance doors of the churches, the roads open out in to sweeping piazzas lined by palaces built in a stone of soft pink and golden yellow hues. A tour of Noto might start from the main square where to visit Palazzo Ducezio, Palazzo Vescovile, Palazzo Lanolina, the Church of San Domenico and, of course, the town's magnificent Cathedral to name but a few of the many buildings worth visiting in Noto.



Here, you will meet **Corrado Assenza**, the master of all Sicilian pastry chefs, who will delight you with his amazing and unique pastry creations (gelato, jams, creams).



Following your time in Noto continues to **Siracusa**.

You will enjoy lunch in an amazing historic “*Salumeria*” located in **Ortigia**, tasting typical Sicilian products (cold cuts, cheeses and “*caponata*”).

Then re-join your local expert guide to travel back in time and explore more than 2,000 years of the city's history...

Like many of Sicily's coastal towns, **Siracusa** was once an ancient Greek settlement of the Magna Graecia era. Go back in time with your expert local guide and discover the city's ancient relics, medieval monuments and modern-day market. Stroll through the island of Ortigia that forms the historic heart of the medieval center and visit the vast cathedral square with its 17th-century Duomo and ornate Baroque palaces. The nearby Fountain of Arethusa, fed by an underground spring, has snow-white ducks paddling under its leafy papyrus plants and stunning sea views. Visit the **Archeological Area** before to return to your hotel and overnight stay.

Day 7

Noto countryside Bike Tour – Vendicari – Marzamemi – San Paolo

Breakfast

9.00 a.m / 4.00 p.m.

With 6 Hours Bike tour

Meet your bike guide and start cycling from San Paolo near Noto through vine yards to the Nature Reserve of Vendicari. Leave the bikes at the guard and take a short walk through the Nature Reserve.

Continue cycling to the small fishing village of Marzamemi where you arrive for lunch time. From Marzamemi you return on secondary roads among vine yards to San Paolo.

As you cycle along an asphalt road through the Sicilian countryside, take in the beautiful seaside views and agricultural farms that grow around Marzamemi. This 18 mile ride has a duration of 3 hours and you will enjoy your highest climbs at an altitude of 50 m (165 ft asl). Marzamemi was established by the Moors in the 10th century and was once known as “Marsà al-hamam” or Turtle Dove Bay. The town is most known for its artisanal fishing, producing a variety of delicacies, including canned tuna, dried tuna roe (bottarga), smoked swordfish, marinated anchovies, seafood pasta condiments, tuna salamis, and much more. Meander through the streets that wind in-and-out of the main plaza offering glimpses of the turquoise sea to the east and north.



Day 8

Enjoy the Aeolian Islands!

Breakfast

Breakfast in hotel and leave to **Milazzo**. Embark on a publick hydrofoil and reach **Salina**.

The **Aeolian Islands** are a volcanic archipelago in the Tyrrhenian Sea north of Sicily. The largest island is **Lipari** and the islands are sometimes referred to as the Lipari Islands. The other islands include Vulcano, Salina, Stromboli, Filicudi, Alicudi, Panarea and Basiluzzo.

The present shape of the Aeolian Islands is the result of volcanic activity over a period of 260,000 years. There are two active volcanoes – Stromboli and Vulcano. The volcanic activity of steaming fumaroles and thermal waters are on most of the islands.

The volcanic activity has also left the islands with very fertile soil that is conducive to the growth of natural flora. The Aeolian Islands are listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site for providing "an outstanding record of volcanic island-building and destruction, and ongoing volcanic phenomena". According to the legends, the magnificent seven pearls of Sicily, are the home of Aeolus God of Wind that from these islands unleash its fury. In these wild places, mythology and ancestral landscapes merge wonderful scenarios.



Arriva in Salina and transfer to your hotel.

Accommodation:

S.M. Salina

4 nights

Day 9

CIAM SALINA! ...nature, tradition and cinema...

9.00 a.m./1.00 p.m.

or

3.00 p.m./7.00 p.m.

Local Guide and car 4h

Breakfast, Granita
tasting, Wine
tasting

Meet your guide for a funny and relaxing way to taste the different souls of Salina, each Lingua for a sweet granita tasting.

First you will be reaching the locations of the movie "Dear Diary" (Caro Diario) by Nanni Moretti and then turn towards the southern side of Salina, with a winery visit, Malfa, known as winter capital of the island and heart of the true Malvasia wine. The tour continues by reaching Rinella, location of some scenes of the famous film "Volcano" with the Italian actress Anna Magnani. After, together with your guide you will be climbing the saddle between two mountains for a "mystical" break to the Madonna del Terzito church, in the agricultural district of the island.



Finally you will experience the amazing sunset at Pollara feeling like the actors of the movie "The Postman" (il Postino) by Massimo Troisi.

Day 10

Panarea and Stromboli hiking

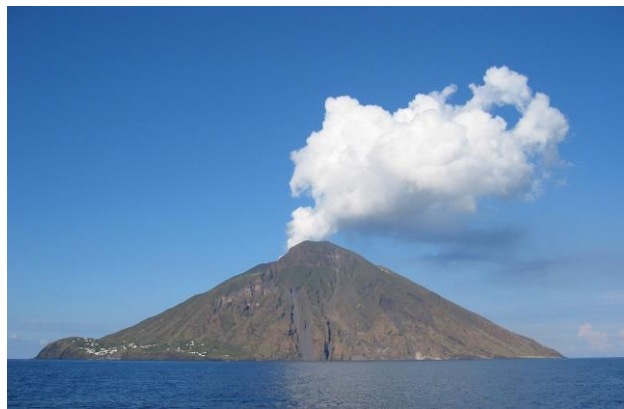
10.00 a.m. / 9.00 p.m.

Breakfast

Meet your expert guide for your trip to **Panarea**, Sicily's most trendy island, frequented by Italian celebrities and socialites alike. On your private boat, navigate through Sicily's blue waters and impressive volcanic formations as you take in the sun and visit secret swimming spots that are only accessible by boat.

Panarea is just north-east of Salina with white villages garlanded with bright bougainvillea flowers, narrow lanes (there are no cars on the island, only golf carts and electric bikes), and is one of the smallest islands out of the 8 that make up Aeolian Islands.

In the afternoon get back on your private boat and head to **Stromboli** Island for your volcano excursion with your private expert guide. With your volcano expert climb about 1,000 ft (300 meters) to the mid-point of the volcano. On your way up overlook the underlying valley covered in rich, colourful vegetation including holm-oak trees, cane and broome thickets, cistus bushes, and white caper flowers. Also notice the abundance of mountain goats that run wild in the area. Once there, take the opportunity to observe the craters and learn about the history of the island from your guide. Continue on to the volcano's summit, Pizzo Sopra La Fossa, at almost 3,000 (850 m) above sea level. Once at the summit, wait till sunset and watch the mouth of the volcano come to life with vibrant red and orange lava spewing out of its centre. Afterwards, gear up in helmets and masks to descend down the volcano in darkness.



After the tour, embark on your private boat to navigate back to Salina Island, and, later, take a private vehicle transfer to the hotel.

Day 11

Lipari & Vulcano

9.00 a.m. / 6.00 p.m.

3 Hours guided tour of Vulcano

3 Hours guided tour of Lipari

Breakfast

In the morning transfer to **Vulcano** by Hydrofoil. Meet your trekking guide and follow him on a well-marked sandy path that climbs the most "dangerous" crater of the archipelago; an incredible lunar landscape of smoking holes, sulphur and volcanic "bombs" awaits you, here is easy to understand why the powerful beauty of this island impressed so many writers and poets.



In the afternoon move by Hydrofil to **Lipari** with your guide and enjoy an interesting tour of the island on a comfortable car: following a panoramic road you reach a fantastic viewpoint on Vulcano island and the western cliffs; the next stop is the bay of Canneto, the beach of the island. Then you proceed to Porticello and Acquacalda for a view of the turquoise sea: it is the “gift” of the pumice stone that is all around you. Again uphill for the viewpoint at Quattropiani and Chiesa vecchia...and just before coming back to Lipari town the world famous overlook of Quattrocchi. Before go back to your accommodation enjoy a nice walk in the labyrinthine center of Lipari.

Day 12
Taormina

Breakfast

Breakfast in hotel and embark on private hydrofoil to Milazzo. (included)

This morning reach the **Milazzo Port** where your private driver will wait for you.

Private transfer to **Taormina**, and day at leisure to explore the town founded by the Greeks in 358 B.C.

Taormina is called the “Pearl of the Mediterranean” for several reasons: nestled on Mount Tauro, it offers the beauty of Mediterranean architecture all the while surrounded by endless magnificent views of both sea and mountains. Thanks to its high position in altitude, Taormina offers visitors a breathtaking panorama.



From its Greek theatre, you can admire the bay of Giardini Naxos and Mount Etna, the highest active volcano in Europe, while on the other side you can gaze out over the coastline toward Messina and view the proximity of the Calabrian coast.

Accommodation:
Taormina

2 nights

Day 13
Etna Jeep Tour & Cottanera Winery
9.00 a.m. / 3.00 p.m.
6 Hours Guided tour

Breakfast, Lunch
with wine tasting,



Breakfast at the hotel. Pick up by your naturalistic driver guide toward **Mount Etna**.

Explore Mount Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe. Discovering Mount Etna is one of the greatest adventure tours in Sicily, not only for the volcanic phenomena but also for the different kinds of vegetation visible during the

ascent. This volcano has more than 400 craters, split all over the Catania county. The first stop of the tour is Valle del Bove, a wide valley located on the eastern slope of the volcano. Valle del Bove is part of the protected area of the Etna Regional Park. Proceeding you will go through old lava flows that date back to 1979 until you reach Mount Fontana, 1300meters above the sea level. This is a great panoramic point, from which you can admire the majesty of the valley and of the Monti Sartorius. Afterwards, a short walk will lead you to the craters of the Sartorius Mountains, which date back to 1865 and are characterized by seven little eruptive cones. Halfway down from the top, you will reach another panoramic point which offers a breath taking view of the Ionian Coast, from Riposto to Taormina and a glimpse of the Calabrian Coast, of the North-East crater and of the latest new lava flows and craters of 2002. Driving up the Mareneve Road, you will reach Piano Provenzana. Here you will have time to relax and enjoy an espresso. Then drive to **Cottanera Winery** and visit its pioneer viticulture. It is today one of the most extraordinary companies in Italian and international enology. The vineyards grow over lava stone, 700 meters above sea level on the northern slope of the volcano. It showcases the particularities of a unique and precious territory. Experience a one of a kind wine tasting with lunch included. Later you will walk through the pine forest of Ragabo and reach the Corruccio cave. Return to Hotel.

Day 14

Arrivederci Sicilia!

Breakfast

Breakfast in hotel. Pick up by your English speaking driver, transfer to Catania airport.