



SICILY: an ISLAND of DELIGHTS *Exuberant, Unique, Atmospheric & Historic*

Strategically situated in the middle of the Mediterranean, **SICILY** feels more different from the rest of Italy than the Straits of Messina would suggest. Having been occupied by some of the western world's richest civilizations - the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans and Spanish – there is a fascinating wealth of varying influences visible in the architecture, culture, wine and cuisine.

We visit some of the less well-known and visited areas including

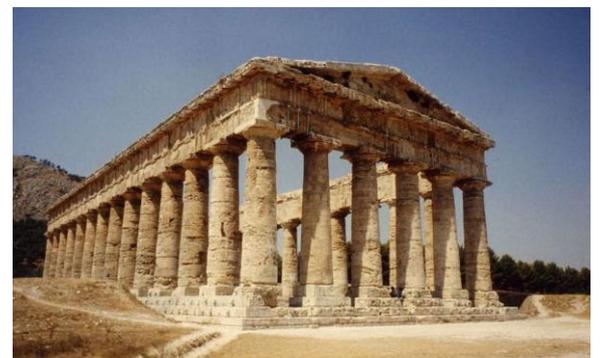
MOZIA and **MARSALA** as well of course as
PALERMO, SEGESTA, SIRACUSA and **ORTIGIA**.

Eschewing the over crowded sites around Taormina, we focus on the western end of the island to see the sumptuous mosaics in **PALERMO** and **MONREALE**, the Greek temples at **SEGESTA** and **SELINUNTE**, enjoy some delicious wines at the long-established cellars of the **FLORIO** family in **MARSALA** and of course enjoy the fascinating markets and deliciously varied wines and cuisine.



OVERVIEW

Tucked under the limestone cliff, **PALERMO** was originally a Phoenician colony and has long been considered a 'prize' to be captured. Having fallen to the Greeks, Arabs and Normans, the city was famed for as a center of learning with a wealthy Court. Rich with churches, this is also a city of bustling colour, markets and excellent restaurants. Our walking tour of this wonderful historic town will include the magnificent **Palazzo dei Normanni, Cappella Palatina** and **Martorana** with their vivid golden Byzantine mosaics depicting scenes of everyday life as well as biblical events. We stroll through the colourful **Capo food market**, bustling with an extraordinary array of differing foods and absorb the vibrant local street life as well as the historic sites. Moving on, we visit the small hill town of **MONREALE** to see the neat cathedral with its exquisite tiny cloister and magnificent golden mosaics executed by Greek and Byzantine craftsmen. Next to the well-preserved Doric temples of **SEGESTA**, which escaped Carthaginians in the late 5th century and finally our day ends on the south coast. **MARSALA**, once the main Phoenician city of the island, the town's Arabic past is apparent in the layout and traffic-free streets around the central piazza. From the Museum with the amazing **Punic warship** we then have a tasting of **marsala** at **Florio** before crossing the patchwork of Roman salt pans by boat, each with its tiny windmill, to the island of **MÓZIA** to the **Whitaker Villa**, where the rooms are packed with terracotta figures, jewellery and the stunning 5th century BC marble sculpture of a young man.





Pausing at the splendidly isolated and romantic ruined Greek city of **SELINUNTE**, a bitter rival to Segesta visited earlier, we cross the island to **SIRACUSA**, with the glorious and historic nucleus of **ORTYGIA** as our goal. Crammed into what was once an island of 500m x 1kilometer are 2,500 years of history with tiny streets and alley ways, piazzas and palazzos, a superb collection of buildings. The most impressive architecture dates from the Baroque period with the **Piazza del Duomo** being the most elegant. Doric columns, once part of a Greek temple, were incorporated into the **Duomo** itself. Surrounding the square are 18th century palazzos and Baroque churches. A tiny piazza opens out onto the **Fonte Aretusa**, the spring which has drawn Greeks, Romans and Nelson, looking for fresh water for their ships. In the main city we visit the **Teatro Greco** dating from the 5th century BC, accommodating 15,000 people, where the **Nymphaeum**, an artificial grotto fed by water from an ancient aqueduct, is delightfully overgrown with caper bushes and flowers and we experience the famous 'Ear of Dionysius' with its curious acoustics.





Tues. 8th Oct: you will be met on arrival and transferred to the **GRAND HOTEL IGEIA**, (2 nights). After checking in, we assemble in the early evening for drinks and dinner. (D)

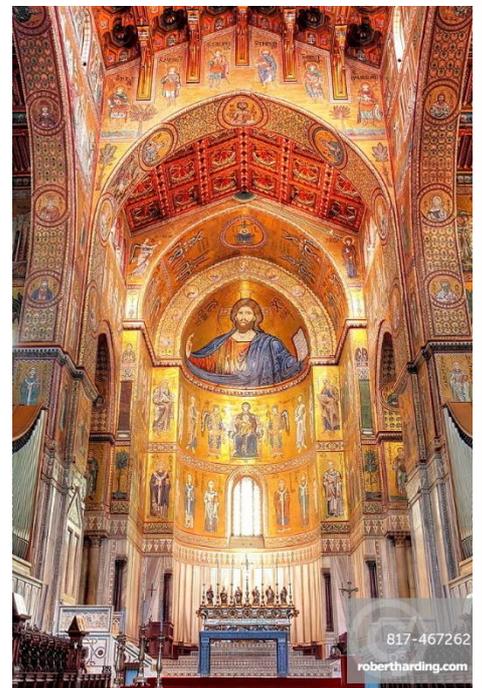
Wed. 9th Oct: fortified by breakfast, we meet our local guide for a walking tour of Palermo. We explore the markets of Capo, enjoy the stunning architecture and visit the Palazzo dei Normanni, Capella Palatina and La Martorana. Lunch at a local small restaurant in town will break the day. Free evening for dinner where you wish. (L)

Thurs 10th Oct: leaving Palermo we transfer with our local guide to Monreale to visit the charming cathedral and cloisters. Lunch will be at the seaside town of Castellammare del Golfo, again at a small local restaurant, before our afternoon visit to the Greek site of Segesta. Continuing to the south coast, we arrive at the **VILLA BAGLIONE ONETO** (2 nights) and dine tonight at the hotel. (L&D)

Fri. 11th Oct: after breakfast we meet our local guide for a day in Marsala and Mózia. After strolling the traffic-free streets we visit the Museum before a wine tasting with snacks for lunch at the famous wine makers - Florio. Moving on, our boat leaves from amongst the Roman salt pans to take us the short trip to the island of Mózia to visit the Whitaker Villa museum. Free evening for dinner where you wish. (L)

Sat. 12th Oct: after breakfast we check out and transfer to visit the atmospheric site of Selinunte, before starting our drive east across the island. We break the drive with lunch en route to arrive in the late afternoon at Ortygia, Siracusa to stay at the **GRAND HOTEL ORTYGIA** (2 nights). Free evening to dine at one of the many small restaurants in easy walking distance. (L)

Sun 13th Oct: this morning we meet our local guide to visit the Teatro Greco in the main part of Siracuse itself, before returning to Ortygia with free time for lunch. Our final afternoon's walking tour includes the magnificent cathedral and we have our farewell dinner in Ortygia itself. (D)



Mon 14th Oct: transfer* to **CATANIA AIRPORT** for your flight.

HOTELS: all rooms may be upgraded with small supplement.

Grand Hotel Villa Igea: This is one of the famous hotels of the world. An Art Nouveau villa created by the Florio family, whose descendants we visit in Marsala. Its sumptuous rooms were designed by Ernesto Basile in 1909 to be a quiet retreat just outside the city. It is a classic, old school seaside hotel with pool, terrace bar and lush gardens. Classic rooms, inner view.

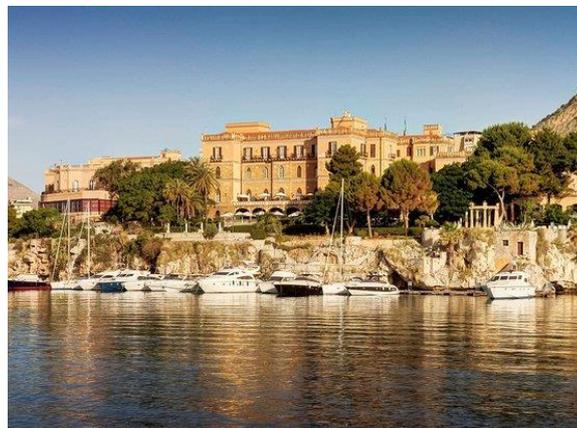
Villa Baglione Oneto: 10 minutes from the center of Marsala, the word 'baglio' refers to a fortified farmhouse. The 18th century buildings have been sympathetically converted and the hotel is still owned by the original family. The estate produces its own wine and there is also a swimming pool. Standard classic rooms.

Grand Hotel Ortygia: Conveniently placed just by the marina and within easy walking distance of Arethusa's Fountain, the hotel has a great roof-top terrace. Standard sea view rooms.

Cost EUR 4,025 per person, based on 2 sharing a room

Single supplement (imposed by the hotels) Eur 576

Please note the itinerary is subject to change if conditions so dictate.



Cost includes:

- Hotels as mentioned, or similar quality, with Continental breakfast, taxes and service charges
- meals as mentioned (4 lunches, 3 dinners with ½ bottle of chosen local wine pp)
- entrance fees and visits as mentioned.
- Group transfer on arrival to Villa Igea.
- Group transfer on 14th Oct to Catania airport
- Transfers connect only with designated flights.
- Transport as mentioned in the itinerary
- gratuities to restaurants, guides and drivers
- services of tour leader



Cost does NOT include:

- arrival at and departure from Sicily & transfers other than those with the specified flights below.
- items of a personal nature, e.g. spa treatments / laundry.
- travel insurance.
- meals and transport unless specified in the itinerary
- government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication on 14/11/2018

FLIGHTS; I am happy to help with flights sadly there are few direct ones to Sicily and only on some days of the week.

The best I feel are below (costing £164pp return @ 13/11/18) **NB differing UK departure & return airports.**

OUTBOUND: Tues 8th October 2019. BA 610 ETD 07.25 London Heathrow / ETA 11.20 PALERMO

RETURN: Mon 14th October 2019. BA 2595 ETD 19.50 CATANIA / ETA Gatwick 22.05

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