

SMALL GROUP BEST OF SICILY TOUR

May 21-29, 2019

Visit Palermo, Agrigento Valley of the Temples,
Siracusa and Taormina

Price per person \$3495.00

Single supplement \$750.00

Travel Safe Insurance \$229.00

MAY 21 - DEPART HOME FOR PALERMO WITH TRANSPORTATION TO THE AIRPORT. MEALS D

MAY 22 - WELCOME TO PALERMO

Arrive in Palermo International Airport and travel to the city center for a two nights stay. WELCOME DINNER THIS EVENING.

Overnight in PALERMO – HOTEL GARIBALDI OR SIMILAR – MEALS BD

MAY 23 - HIGHLIGHTS OF PALERMO & MONUMENTAL MONREALE

Breakfast in hotel. Start your discovery of Sicily with a guided walking tour of **PALERMO**, the Sicilian capital. A crossroads of history, Palermo holds the distinction of being the world's most conquered city and a melting pot of civilizations ranging from the Phoenicians, Romans and Byzantines to the Arabs and Normans. We have included today a visit to the Byzantine Martorana church, famous for its impressive Norman mosaics, the evocative Palatine Chapel, dating back to the 12th century, famous for its impressive mosaics, some of the rooms of the Royal Palace and an exclusive visit to the Opera House of Palermo. After a visit to the Ballarò market located in the ancient Arabic quarter of the city and an included lunch in the best Palermitan tavern, we'll continue to discover the town of **MONREALE**, known for one of Sicily's great sites – the stunning 12th century Norman cathedral literally wallpapered with golden mosaics that tell the stories of the bible. Evening is on your own to enjoy Palermo

Overnight in PALERMO - MEALS B

MAY 24 - CAPTIVATING CEFALU' & AGRIGENTO VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES

This morning drive takes you to visit the charming fishing village of **CEFALU'**. The squares, streets and churches of this medieval town are so postcard-pretty that it's no wonder director Giuseppe Tornatore chose to set parts of his much-loved film Cinema Paradiso here. Most of Cefalu sites are found in the historic town centre around Corso Ruggero and Piazza del Duomo, where you can visit the striking Cathedral, a mosaic-adorned outpost of Norman power and one of the jewels in Sicily's Arab-Norman crown. After time on your own for sightseeing and maybe an Italian "gelato", you'll continue to the Valley of the Temples in **AGRIGENTO**, an incredible concentration of Greek temples in varying states of ruin and reconstruction. We'll explore the major temples with a local expert who will shed light on these monuments to the Golden age of Tyranny. This historic site was the heart of one of the most important cities in the ancient world and is the prime example of the magnificence of Magna Grecia..

Overnight stay in AGRIGENTO – FORESTERIA BAGLIO DELLA LUNA OR SIMILAR – MEALS BD

MAY 25 - ROMAN VILLA MOSAICS & SIRACUSA'S ELEGANCE

Your transfer to Siracusa features a stop at the **ROMAN VILLA**, one of the 44 UNESCO World Heritage sites in Italy, built in the first quarter of the 4th century. It contains the richest, largest and most complex collection of Roman mosaics in the world. The villa was a luxurious hunting lodge used, some believe by the Roman emperor Maximian. After being abandoned in the 1200s, it was covered by a mudslide that protected the mosaics until systematic excavation in 1880s. Following a lunch in a country family owned Osteria, your journey continues to the city of **SIRACUSA**.

Overnight in SIRACUSA – GRAND HOTEL VILLA POLITI OR SIMILAR – MEALS B

MAY 26 - ENCHANTING SIRACUSA- "TOWN OF TYRANTS"

Encapsulating Sicily's timeless beauty, Syracuse is a dense tapestry of overlapping cultures and civilizations. In the morning, you'll explore this major outpost of the Greek empire with a local expert. The city boasts an incredible historical heritage, starting from the Archaeological Park, featuring the ancient Greek Theater now used for classical performances,

the Latomie del Paradiso, the largest quarry in the ancient urban settlement and the Ear Of Dionysus, a subterranean artificial cave quarry used as a prison. You'll see numerous elegant Baroque town houses, rebuilt after the earthquake that severely damaged the city in 1693, the elegant Piazza Duomo, dominated by the Cathedral's baroque facade that is subdivided by columns and the Temple of Athena from the 5th century BC lying behind it and the Caravaggio painting in the charming church of St Lucia. After an included foodie experience at the lively market, you'll be sailing around the fascinating island of Ortigia to discover some of its prehistoric caves (weather permitting). Dinner is included in a local tavern.

Overnight in SIRACUSA – MEALS BD

MAY 27 - BAROQUE NOTO & MOUNT ETNA WITH WINERY

After breakfast at our hotel, we depart for **TAORMINA**, one of the island's most ancient towns and most beautiful destinations. On the way you'll discover the splendid UNESCO town of Noto, with its remarkable architectural integrity. It presents a pleasing ensemble of honey-color buildings, strikingly uniform in style and a world famous domed Cathedral, an undisputed highlight of the extraordinary Baroque architecture. Continue to majestic **MOUNT ETNA**, known to the Greeks as the "column that holds up the sky"-Mt Etna is the highest and largest volcano in Europe and one of the world's most active. The peak changes in size over the years. It currently rises at 11,000 feet above sea level and literally towers above Sicily's Ionian coast. Since 1987 its slopes have been part of the Etna Parkland, an area that encompasses both alpine forests and the forbiddingly black summit. You'll ascend to 7,000 ft. and take a walk to visit the Silvestri Craters and new lava flow from recent eruptions (further ascend to highest levels to be paid locally). Afterwards, you'll descend to the village of Linguaglossa to visit a well-known winery where to taste excellent Sicilian wines accompanied by "delizioso" lunch.

Overnight in TAORMINA – HOTEL CAPARENA OR SIMILAR – MEALS BL

MAY 28 - TAORMINA WALKING TOUR, CASTELMOLA

This morning we have arranged a guided tour of Taormina. Its origin goes back to the time of Dionysius in about 400 BC. It remained an important city during the Greek and Roman periods and the Theatre and Odeon still survive as reminders of those times. Taormina also boasts a number of elegant mansions and palaces dating back from the Middle Ages, and several interesting churches including the 15th century fortified cathedral, and St Pancras', which incorporates part of a Greek temple. Afterwards, you will be driven to the charming town of Castelmola perched high above Taormina, boasting amazing views over the mainland of Italy. Dinner is on your own.

Overnight in TAORMINA – MEALS BD

MAY 29 - ARRIVEDERCI BELLA SICILIA

Morning transfers to Catania airport for your flight home. Arrivederci from all of us...and thanks for travelling with Thompson Tours! MEALS BL

Price includes airfare, 7 nights, 7 breakfasts, 4 dinners, 1 lunch, all tours and a admissions listed on the itinerary, as well as fully escorted with a

Thompson Tours Representative

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL THOMPSON TOURS AT

570-344-8664 OR 1-866-484-6677

VISIT US AT OUR ONLINE BOOKING SITE

WWW.THOMPSONTOURS.COM

DEPOSIT \$600.00

TRAVEL SAFE INSURANCE \$239.00

THANK YOU FOR TRAVELING WITH THOMPSON TOURS!