

Sicily West to East ~ following Southern routes ~ 2010

Day 0/ September 22 - Wednesday

Arriving in Palermo

Nicoletta will greet you at the Airport and help you transfer to downtown Palermo. You can choose to stay at the very convenient, central, and pleasant Hotel Roma

OPTIONAL

Accommodation at **Hotel Ambasciatori**, 3 star hotel in the historical centre of Palermo. Overnight stay.

DOUBLE ROOM **50 EURO**

SINGLE ROOM **75 EURO**

(PRICE is PER PERSON- BREAKFAST INCLUDED)

<http://www.ambasciatorihotelpalermo.net/>

Day 1/ September 23- Thursday

Palermo's food markets

In the morning meeting in hotel. Today we will visit the “centro” of this fascinating town and its historical food markets as “Il Capo” and Ballarò, escorted by our Local Tour Guide, who will illustrate the intricate history of Palermo and its customs. These street food markets are the symbols of Palermo; you will see the meat and fish sellers, or the vegetables, fruit and spices sellers. Here we will taste typical street food such as “panica meusa”, “panelle”, “arancini”...

Lunch on our own and transfer to the hills around **Marsala.**, presently the center for olive oil production in Sicily.

Accommodation at **Baglio Vecchio**, a beautiful four star farm house, in the Tenuta Zangara Estate surrounded by olive trees and famous for the olive oil production. We will visit the farm with the owner Maria Stella and we will have an **olive oil tasting**.

Dinner and overnight stay.

www.tenutazangara.it



Day 2/ September 24- Friday

Erice and Maria Grammatico's pastry shop!

Breakfast and transfer to **Erice**, a wonderful and mysterious medieval town perched on a hilltop at 2000 feet with sweeping vistas of the western Mediterranean Sea. Walking through the cobblestoned streets we will smell a variety of aromas emanating from the numerous pastry shops for which Erice is famous, and see the Norman Castle and the Duomo. Then we will stop at the world famous **Pastry shop by Maria Grammatico** (book: Bitter Almonds, by Mary Taylor Simenti) to taste her almond sweets, genovesi and nougat..

Lunch on our own and free time.

In the afternoon we will go on to admire the Salt Road and its **Salt Pans** located on the coastline between the cities of Trapani and Marsala. Locals extract the salt from the seawater following the same procedure used by the ancient Greeks and Phoenicians who once colonized this part of the Sicily. Once extracted from the water and dried, the salt is heaped into mounds and covered in tiles—just like the ones used on our roofs—so the rain won't melt the salt before it's packed. Return to the **Baglio Vecchio**, dinner and overnight stay.



Day 3 / September 25 - Saturday

Segesta & the Madonie Mountains

Breakfast and check-out. Today we visit our first Greek temple in the middle of the countryside at **Segesta**. As the major Greek city in western Sicily, ancient Segesta was besieged and conquered by Dionysius and Agathocles, and eventually fell to the Romans. Here we'll see this beautiful Doric temple, dating from the fifth century B.C., perched on a hill of wild fennel. Although never completed, it is in an excellent state of preservation, and commands a majestic setting from its position.



Lunch on our own and departure for the Madonie Mountains in direction of **Gangi**.

From lush and Mediterranean, the scenery will change to rolling hills and pastures, dotted by little villages made of gray stone: this is the heartland of Sicily.

Accommodation at **Tenuta Gangivecchio**.

Dinner and overnight stay.

<http://gangivecchio.org/>

Day 4 / September 26 - Sunday

Cooking Class with Giovanna Tornabene ...



Gangivecchio is a Benedictine Abbey built in the 1300's, and belongs to the Tornabene family since the 1800's. It's the home of Giovanna Tornabene and her mother Wanda, and this is where they have their cooking school, internationally famous especially after the mother and daughter published 3 cook books in English. Our Hotel is right in front of the Abbey, and is run by Paolo, Giovanna's brother who is also an excellent cook and architect. He designed the building converting what used to be the Abbey's horse stables and his breakfast table is abundant of home made jams, cakes, and fruit. Needless to say his dinners are excellent.

The now 80 year old Wanda started her own restaurant in the Abbey when she found herself completely broke and wanted nevertheless to keep her family's home. Her success was immediate, people would drive from Palermo, 2 hours away to have delicious lunches in the hills; she was also a scandal amongst those who believed a

home cannot become a business. On the grounds, there is an organic vegetable garden, and here the family recently found ancient shards that indicate an even older construction lies beneath, maybe a Roman city...

After breakfast we will start our hands-on cooking class with Giovanna, who will teach us to prepare a typical Sicilian meal, from appetizer to dessert. **Lunch** will be in the Abbey's Restaurant with whatever we cooked.

In the afternoon we can walk around the grounds or take our private bus to explore the village of Gangi nearby. Dinner and overnight in Hotel **Gangivecchio**. <http://gangivecchio.org/>

Day 5 / September 27- Monday

Valley of the Temples

Breakfast and check-out. Today we depart towards South-East towards **Agrigento** to visit the beautiful **Valley of the Temples**, one of the most representative sites of Greek civilization in the Mediterranean area. Our local Tour-Guide will tell us all about the Temple of Hercules, the Temple of Juno, the Temple of Castor and Pollux, the wonderful Temple of Concord and finally the beautiful Garden of Kolymbetra where we will have a **picnic lunch**. Accommodation at **Hotel Dioscuri Bay Palace** in the resort town nearby Agrigento, on the southern coast (Mare d'Africa), right on the beach.



During the afternoon we will have the time to enjoy the sea or relax. Dinner on our own. the town is full of great little places like **Il Porticciolo** or **Il Pescatore**. Overnight stay.

http://www.framonhotelgroup.com/it/agrigento/dioscuri_bay_palace/index.html

Day 6 / September 28 - Tuesday

A visit to the country

Breakfast and departure for the nearby village **Sant'Angelo Muxaro**. Our guide will walk us to the local wood burning oven (Forno) for a taste of bread; then we will visit the local cheese maker and watch them make ricotta cheese, and maybe visit the 86 year-old Zi Caluzzu, who weaves baskets.. This walking itinerary really takes us far



from the classic tourist routes.

Then off for a cooking class in a typical private country house to learn how to prepare Sicilian pizza with traditional ingredients . **Lunch** with pizza's we have made ourselves and hot bread with olive oil and oregano!

In the afternoon we will go on an archaeological walk with our local Tour Guide through the countryside at the base of Sant'Angelo Muxaro where recently have been discovered the largest and oldest Tholos Tomb in Sicily (300 B.C.). This whole area is connected with the myth of Dedalus and Icarus and the Minotaur labyrinth.

.Return to the hotel and free time. Dinner on our own and overnight stay.

Day 7 / September 29 - Wednesday

Piazza Armerina and Siracusa

Breakfast and check-out. This morning we will leave the coast to venture in the interior, in **Piazza Armerina** to admire the extraordinary floor mosaics in the Roman Villa del Casale. The famed Roman mosaics housed in this third century villa are among the best preserved in the world, depicting scenes from everyday life.

Lunch on our own and departure for **Siracusa**. Until the Arab conquest of 878, the **Siracusa** was the capital of Sicily. It was by far the most important city on the island.

Our Hotel is in the wonderful historical centre of Siracusa on the **Ortigia Island**, a pedestrians only area overlooking the Sea of Africa and where we can admire the Cathedral, constructed over the ancient Temple of Athena (still visible), the Aretusa fountain surrounded by giant Papyrus plants and the ancient streets., the Temple of Apollo, and walk around this fascinating and intriguing city in the city.

Dinner on our own. Accommodation at Hotel Roma

<http://www.hotelroma.sr.it>



Day 8/ September 30 - Thursday

Enjoy Chocolate!

Breakfast and depart towards the Baroque area of Sicily, whose heritage, both for importance and for beauty, has been declared World Heritage by UNESCO. In the morning we will visit the beautiful centre of **Modica**, a town built on the hill slopes with many stairs and steep little streets and the **Antica Dolceria Bonajuto**, the oldest confectionary shop of Sicily where we'll taste the unique chocolates of Modica. The owner will demonstrate (and we will sample) a few of his spectacular chocolates.



Lunch on our own. After lunch visit of the town of **Noto**, a short distance away, through a countryside dotted with carob trees and mile long low stone walls. We will do a walking tour of the historical centre and taste special **Granita Siciliana** (layered ice cake). Return to the Ortigia. Dinner on our own.

Day 9/ October 1st - Friday

Mount Etna

Breakfast and departure to **Mount Etna**, Europe's most active and one of the oldest recorded volcanoes. Accommodation in a typical farm house on Mount Etna. We will gently climb the Eastern side on the volcano, and visit a few small towns that overlook its slopes ; this is an area rich in production of honey, wine, chestnuts . In autumn the porcini mushrooms are huge! On the way we will admire the beautiful volcanic landscape of the **Mount Etna** and also some of the damage that the volcanic eruptions have made to the countryside over the centuries.

We will arrive to the highest point on Etna where a vehicle can arrive. Time for walking and taking photos. Lunch on our own.

Accommodation in working farm house on the gentle slopes of Eastern Mount Etna.. This Agriturismo whose chef has an incredible reputation used to be a Convent. <http://www.caseperrotta.it/>

Dinner and overnight stay.



Day 10/ October 2nd -Saturday

Wine Tasting and Taormina

Breakfast and departure towards **Taormina**. Taormina is on the Eastern Coast of Sicily, on the Ionian Sea, and this exquisite walled medieval town, perched on a cliff is also called the Montecarlo of Italy, because of its dazzling views and the refined guests that have come here since the early 1800's. Its touristy, but an absolute must-see. We'll meet our local Tour Guide that will illustrate **Taormina**, its history and the amazing **Greek Amphitheatre** set on a hill overlooking the sea with the view of the Sea and Volcano... The historical centre is rich in luxurious shops. Free time to walk around and sip espresso or wine at a local café. Lunch on our own.



In the afternoon we will go back towards the hills of Etna and on our way to our farm visit the lovely **Tenuta San Michele**, an ancient estate located on the slopes of the volcano. The farm, which belongs to the noble family of the **Baron Scammacca del Murgo**, is surrounded by extensive vineyards and has a panoramic view of both Mt. Etna and the sea. We will visit the winery and taste their best wines as Etna Rosso, Etna Bianco and the extraordinary Murgo Brut.

Return to our farmhouse, and overnight. Dinner on our own.

Day 11/ October 3- Sunday

Cooking Class with Eleonora Consoli

Breakfast and check-out. Today we are in for our third cooking class: departure to **Viagrande**, a small village on the Etna slopes, home of our cooking class teacher **Eleonora Consoli**. Mrs Eleonora Consoli's cooking classes are called **La Cucina del Sole** (The Sun's Kitchen). Eleonora has written several cookbooks on Sicilian gastronomy and is the official expert on Sicilian cooking in the world.

She will conduct a hands-on cooking class in her kitchen teaching us several Sicilian dishes. Our lunch will be in her home frescoed dining room and we will eat what we prepared.

In the afternoon we will be heading back to Palermo but first we will take a look at Eastern Capital of Sicily: **Catania**, a city that has been submerged by the ashes of the erupting Mt Etna innumerable times and has also been destroyed by a terrible earthquake in the 1600's, but has always rebuilt itself, making it a miracle that it is there at all. Afterwards we will take the fast way back to the Western Coast (3 hrs) and arrive in time for a late dinner, Sicilian style. Overnight at **Hotel Del Centro**. Dinner on our own.

<http://www.hoteldelcentro.net/>





Day 12/ October 4 - Monday

Breakfast and check-out and goodbyes.

Arrivederci everyone!

OR

choose to extend you stay in Sicily!

Price per person*

Euro 2.170 double occupancy

Single room Suppl. **Euro195**

The price includes

- 2 Hb at Baglio Vecchio **** in Marsala (beverage included);
- 2 HB at Gangivecchio ***
- 2 BB at Dioscuri Bay Palace hotel **** in Agrigento;
- 2 BB at Hotel Roma **** in Siracusa ;
- 1 HB + 1 BB at Case Perrotta **** on Mount Etna (beverage included);
- 1 BB at Hotel Ambasciatori *** in Palermo;
- Transfer with private minibus 16/20 seats from Day 1 to Day 11 ;
- Professional Tour guides and entrance fees in Palermo, Valley of the Temples and Kolymbetra, Piazza Armerina, Sant'Angelo Muxaro, and Taormina;
- All cooking class with lunch and beverages;
- Pic nic lunch at Kolymbetra Garden;
- Visit and tasting at Murgo Winery , Pastry Shop, Dolceria Bonajuto

HB = Half Board, Breakfast and 1 meal BB= bed & Breakfast

* Payments will be in US Dollars for the amount corresponding to the Euro amount.

The price doesn't include

- Transfer to/ from airport;
- first optional night in Palermo
- lunches and dinners at leisure;
- The extras related to individual initiative;
- insurance. *

*Medical Insurance for the Sicily only portion of your travel (12 days) is available at an extra Euro 20 per person.