



Cassata · Sicilia



— A TWELVE-DAY GASTRONOMIC JOURNEY —

Sicilian Food & Wine *Journey*

October 12 – 23, 2026 · Palermo to Cefalù

DEPARTURE

Oct 12, 2026

DURATION

12 Days · 11 Nights

GROUP SIZE

15 Guests, *minimum*

STYLE

Boutique 4 ★ *luxury*



An Island, a Country, a Kitchen

Where every meal *tells a story.*

Sicily is a country masquerading as an island — twelve civilizations passed through, and every one of them left a recipe. We travel slowly, eat well, and let the island do the talking.



Ancient *Heritage*

Greek temples at Agrigento, Arab-Norman cathedrals in Palermo, Roman mosaics, Baroque palazzi in Catania. Seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites in a single island.



Gastronomic *Richness*

Caponata, arancine, busiate al pesto trapanese, sfincione, cassata, cannoli. A cuisine layered by Greek, Arab, Norman and Spanish hands — each visible in the kitchen still.



Wines & *Cellars*

From the volcanic nerello mascalese of Etna to the amber Marsala DOC, from Nero d'Avola in the south to Grillo and Catarratto in the west — twelve days of vineyard visits, cellar tastings, and long suppers paired by the people who poured the wine.

DAY BY DAY

Your *twelve-day* journey

No 12 Days · 11 Nights

1	OCT 12 <i>Mon</i>	Arrival in Palermo Welcome at PMO airport, transfer to Hotel President. Aperitivo and welcome dinner at a historic city palazzo.
2	OCT 13 <i>Tue</i>	Palermo · Markets & Cathedral Walking tour of Ballarò & Capo markets, Palermo Cathedral, Quattro Canti. Street-food lunch and free afternoon.
3	OCT 14 <i>Wed</i>	Erice, the Hilltop Town Drive west via Segesta. Afternoon in medieval Erice, Castello di Venere, evening in Marsala.
4	OCT 15 <i>Thu</i>	Saline di Trapani at Sunset Salt pans walk, working windmills, aperitivo on the saltworks. Marsala wine tasting in a 19th-century cellar.
5	OCT 16 <i>Fri</i>	Mazara del Vallo · Cooking Class Hands-on cooking class & lunch at a traditional Sicilian farm. Couscous, busiate, almond pesto. Free afternoon in Marsala.
6	OCT 17 <i>Sat</i>	Selinunte & the Western Coast Greek temples of Selinunte, beachside lunch, return to Marsala for a final evening.
7	OCT 18 <i>Sun</i>	Agrigento · Valley of the Temples Drive south to the Valle dei Templi. Late-afternoon tour of the temples. Overnight Hotel Costazzurra.
8	OCT 19 <i>Mon</i>	Caltagirone & Catania Maiolica workshop on the 142-step staircase. Onward to Catania. Evening passeggiata under Etna.
9	OCT 20 <i>Tue</i>	Mount Etna · Wine Country Drive up Etna's southern flank. Tasting at a nerello mascalese estate. Lunch and afternoon at the winery.
10	OCT 21 <i>Wed</i>	Taormina · Greek Theatre Morning at the Teatro Antico above the bay. Free afternoon on Corso Umberto. Evening drive to Cefalù.
11	OCT 22 <i>Thu</i>	Cefalù · Norman Cathedral Morning visit to the Duomo, afternoon at the beach. Farewell dinner at a beachfront trattoria.
12	OCT 23 <i>Fri</i>	Departure from Palermo Morning transfer to PMO airport. Arrivederci, Sicilia.

THE ROUTE

An *island* in twelve days



INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

Ten things you'll do

- Walking food tour of Palermo's Ballarò market
- Sunset aperitivo at the Trapani salt pans
- Marsala DOC tasting in a 19th-century cellar
- Hands-on cooking class at a traditional Sicilian farm, Mazara
- Valle dei Templi visit
- Maiolica workshop with a Caltagirone artisan
- Etna nerello mascalese tasting & lunch
- Teatro Antico di Taormina visit
- Norman Cathedral visit at Cefalù
- Farewell beachfront dinner under the Rocca

KEY FACTS

GROUP	<i>15 min</i>
PACE	<i>Relaxed</i>
WALKING	<i>Moderate</i>



DAYS 1 - 2 · OCTOBER 12 - 13

Palermo

A capital, layered like a thousand-leaf pastry.

Founded by the Phoenicians, conquered by Romans, ruled by Arabs, refashioned by Normans, gilded by the Spanish Bourbons — Palermo is the most palimpsest of cities. Its kitchen carries them all: pannelle from the Arabs, sfincione from the Spanish, cannoli from the Normans, and arancine from somebody clever in between.

We base ourselves at the elegant **Hotel President**, a few minutes' walk from the seafront. Our days unfold slowly: the morning tumult of **Ballarò market**, the silent gold of the Cappella Palatina, an afternoon coffee in a Baroque-tiled bar, and the long lunch that anchors a Sicilian day.

Two full days lets the rhythm of the city settle in. Late breakfasts, mid-morning at the markets, the slow lunch, the riposo, then the evening passeggiata until granita time. Sicily eats late — and we live by Sicilian hours.



FRITTOLA E VESPA, BALLARÒ

BALLARÒ

CAPO

PESCHERIA

CAPPELLA PALATINA

QUATTRO CANTI



WHERE YOU'LL SLEEP

Hotel President

★★★★

Refined four-star property a short walk from the cathedral and the seafront promenade. Quiet rooms, continental breakfast, attentive staff.

NIGHTS	DAYS	LOCATION
2	1 - 2	City Centre

SICILIAN SAYING “*Cu cumincia, è a la mità di l'opra.*” Who begins is halfway done.



DAY 3 · OCT 14

Erice



DAYS 4 – 6 · OCT 15 – 17

Marsala & the Saline

Mountain town, salt pans, wine cellars

Where the *Mediterranean* turns silver.

Erice · the *medieval* hilltop town

2,400 feet above the Tyrrhenian Sea, Erice's cobbled lanes have not changed since the Normans. We climb to the Castello di Venere, a medieval fortress built on the foundations of an ancient temple of Aphrodite, and stop at a historic pastry shop known for almond paste pastries baked from a 1950s convent recipe.

At dusk Erice has its own weather — fog rolls up from the coast and the lanterns come on. We time our visit for golden hour, when the stone turns rose and the Tyrrhenian goes molten 700 meters below.

- **Castello di Venere** · Norman fortress on a Phoenician temple
- **A historic pastry shop** · convent-recipe genovesi
- **Cobbled lanes** at 2,400 ft above the sea

Marsala & the *Salt Pans*

The sun goes pink over the Saline di Trapani as flamingos pick through the shallow basins. We taste Marsala DOC in a 19th-century solera cellar, then drive south to **Mazara del Vallo** for a hands-on cooking class at a traditional Sicilian farm: couscous, busiate, almond pesto, fresh sea bream.

- **The salt flats of Trapani** · sunset walk & aperitivo
- **A historic Marsala DOC winery** · Marsala DOC tasting
- **A traditional Sicilian farm, Mazara** · cooking class & dinner
- **Selinunte** · Greek temples on the western coast



WHERE YOU'LL SLEEP

Baitan Hotel *Marsala*



Modern boutique property minutes from the cellars and the seafront. Quiet rooftop, continental breakfast.

4 Nights

DAYS 3 – 6

WINE OF THE STOP

Marsala *DOC*

GRILLO · INZOLIA · CATARRATTO

1773

Amber to mahogany. Honey, dried apricot, walnut, and a salt edge from the western sea. Aged in old oak by the solera method since the British invented it in 1773 — the Sicilians have been refining it ever since.

SICILIAN SAYING “*Cu havi vinu, havi gloria.*” Who has wine has glory.

DAY 7 · OCTOBER 18

Valley of the Temples

Eight Doric temples line a yellow ridge above the Mediterranean, founded as **Akragas** by Greek colonists from Gela in the 6th century BCE. The **Temple of Concordia**, built around 440 BCE, is the best-preserved Doric temple in the world – a single colonnade against the sky. The **Temple of Juno** stands further along the ridge, its altars still scorched from a 5th-century Carthaginian sack.

We walk the valley as the light goes long, accompanied by an archaeologist guide. By sunset, the columns turn from honey to amber to bronze, and the swallows come out. Dinner is in the medieval centre of Agrigento itself, at a trattoria built into the city walls.

“The most beautiful of mortal cities.”

– PINDAR, ON AKRAGAS



CONCORDIA, LATE AFTERNOON

UNESCO 1997

World Heritage Site since 1997, one of seven on the island.

1,300 ha

Archaeological park along the Akragas ridge – Italy's largest.

Built 510 BCE

The earliest of the temples – Heracles – dates from circa 510 BCE.



WHERE YOU'LL SLEEP

Hotel Costazzurra



Quiet, comfortable property with valley views and a continental breakfast.

1 Night

DAY 7



DAY 8 · OCT 19

Catania



DAY 9 · OCT 20

Mount Etna

Black lava, Baroque ambition, volcanic wines

The eastern coast, in two acts.

Catania & La Pescheria

Built and rebuilt of black lava and Baroque ambition, Catania is the most theatrical of Sicilian cities. We visit La Pescheria — the dawn fish market behind Piazza Duomo — and the Bellini Theatre, where the composer himself once conducted. Lunch is at a traditional trattoria in the historic centre; dinner with the Etnean wines we'll meet tomorrow.

The market itself is a thing to be seen — fishmongers swing red scampi and silver swordfish like they're conducting an opera. We arrive at first light, walk through with a local guide, and stop at a stall for a glass of bianco fermo at nine in the morning. This is how Catania starts its day.



Etna · The Volcano's Wines

We drive up Etna's southern flank to a winery growing nerello mascalese in volcanic ash. The vines here are old — sometimes a hundred years — and ungrafted. Lunch at the cantina, with a view of the smoking summit. Etna Rosso, Etna Bianco, and a quiet awe.

Etna is not one mountain but a system — four main vents, the highest active volcano in Europe at 3,329 meters, and an ash plume that often crowns the summit. The vineyards sit between 600 and 1,000 meters, the highest in Italy.

WHERE YOU'LL SLEEP

Hotel Plaza · Catania

★★★★

Sophisticated urban hotel near Piazza Duomo, in the heart of baroque Catania. Rooftop bar with views of Etna.

NIGHTS	DAYS	LOCATION
2	8 – 9	Centro Storico

WINE OF THE STOP

Etna DOC

NERELLO MASCALESE · CARRICANTE

1,000m

Cherry, iron, ash on the red; salt, citrus zest and white stone fruit on the white. Vines a century old, ungrafted, rooted in volcanic ash between 600 and 1,000 meters — the highest vineyards in Italy.

SICILIAN SAYING “Cu nasci a la Muntagna, mori a la Muntagna.” Who is born on the Mountain, dies on the Mountain.



DAY 8 · MORNING STOP · OCT 19

Caltagirone — The City of Ceramics

The Arabs taught Sicily how to glaze. The Normans gave them a name for it — maiolica. By the seventeenth century, the small inland town of Caltagirone had become Sicily's ceramic capital, and its 142-step **Scalinata di Santa Maria del Monte** the showcase: every riser tiled by a different artisan, every step a slightly different century.

We climb the staircase slowly, then duck into a master ceramicist's atelier for a hands-on workshop. Each guest paints a small tile to take home — a square of Sicily, fired and signed. Lunch at a local trattoria below the cathedral, with the famous Caltagirone honey for dessert.

The motifs you see on a Sicilian ceramic — the Moor's head, the pinecone, the prickly pear — are not decoration but memory. Each carries a story from the island's long Mediterranean past: of Arab governors and Norman queens, of sailors and almond groves.



MAIOLICA

142 STEPS

HAND-PAINTED

1,000-YR TRADITION

Workshop

Two hours with a master ceramicist; paint a tile to take home.

The Staircase

Built 1606, retiled 1955 — every riser a different design, every century a different hand.

Local lunch

Trattoria in the historic center; famous Caltagirone honey for dessert.

SICILIAN SAYING *“Cu havi arti, havi parti.”* Who has a craft has a livelihood.



Greek theatre, Norman cathedral, the long farewell

Two coasts, *two evenings*, twelve days.

Taormina & the Greek Theatre

Built by the Greeks in the 3rd century BCE and reshaped by the Romans, the Teatro Antico opens to a view of Etna and the Ionian Sea that has not changed in 2,300 years. We visit early, before the cruise crowds, then walk the corso for an unhurried lunch and free time at the Bellevue gardens.

Taormina has been a stage for two thousand years — Greek tragedy, Roman games, Tennessee Williams in summer. Today the corso is a long parade of pasticceria and silk shops, and a granita at a historic café is the only morning obligation.

Cefalù & the Norman Cathedral

Cefalù curls beneath La Rocca, its golden Norman cathedral facing the sea. We visit the Christ Pantokrator mosaic — gold-leaf and lapis lazuli, twelfth-century Byzantine — and stop at a renowned local pasticceria whose almond and pistachio sweets are loved across the island. Farewell dinner is on the beach.



WHERE YOU'LL SLEEP Santa Lucia Le Sabbie d'Oro



Beachfront elegance under the Norman rock — family-run, quietly grand. Rooms open to the Tyrrhenian.

2 Nights

DAYS 10 - 11



SICILIAN SAYING “*Tutto u munnu è paisi.*” The whole world is one village.



Cannoli & Cassata



Markets & Street Food

A Culinary Passport

The flavours of *Sicily*, at a glance.

Sicilian cooking is the long expression of twelve civilizations. We taste it slowly, table by table.

Nº 01

Arancine & Street Food

Saffron-rice spheres descended from Arab kitchens; panelle, the chickpea fritters of Palermo; sfincione, the Sunday pizza-by-another-name. We eat them where the locals do, at Ballarò and Capo, with espresso to follow.

Nº 02

Cannoli & Cassata

Crisp ricotta-stuffed shells in Palermo; pistachio cream in Bronte; layered marzipan cassata in Catania. The Norman dessert tradition, alive in every pasticceria on the island.

Nº 03

Wines of Etna & Marsala

Three appellations: Marsala DOC, the western fortified wine; Etna Rosso, made of nerello mascalese on volcanic ash; Nero d'Avola, the island's most-planted red. Three glasses, three thousand years.

Nº 04

Couscous & the Arab Heritage

In Mazara and Trapani, fish couscous remains the Friday dish – a direct line to the Aghlabid emirate of the ninth century. We learn it by hand at a traditional Sicilian farm: pearled, steamed, served with a saffron broth.

Five tables included

- ◆ Welcome dinner
- ◆ Ballarò street-food lunch
- ◆ Saline aperitivo
- ◆ Cooking class & dinner
- ◆ Marsala tasting
- ◆ Etna lunch
- ◆ Farewell beachside dinner



CANNOLI
Palermo



ARANCINA
Street kitchen



CAPONATA
Summer dish



APERITIVO
Sundown ritual

WHERE YOU'LL SLEEP

Five hotels, *eleven nights.*

All four-star, hand-selected


Hotel *President*

★ ★ ★ ★

Refined city-centre property, walk to the cathedral and seafront promenade. Quiet rooms, continental breakfast.

2

NIGHTS

Days 1 – 2


Baitan *Hotel*

★ ★ ★ ★

Modern boutique hotel in the heart of Marsala wine country, minutes from the cellars and the seafront.

4

NIGHTS

Days 3 – 6

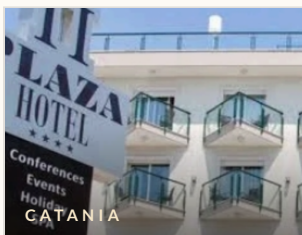

Hotel *Costazzurra*

★ ★ ★ ★

Comfortable property with views over the Valley of the Temples; quiet terrace and a continental breakfast.

1

NIGHT

Day 7


Hotel *Plaza*

★ ★ ★ ★

Sophisticated urban hotel near Piazza Duomo, with a rooftop bar overlooking Etna.

2

NIGHTS

Days 8 – 9


Santa Lucia Le *Sabbie d'Oro*

★ ★ ★ ★

Beachfront elegance under La Rocca – family-run, quietly grand, with rooms opening directly to the sea.

2

NIGHTS

Days 10 – 11
5
HOTELS

11
NIGHTS

4★
THROUGHOUT

** Hotels listed are our preferred selections. Accommodations are subject to availability; should a listed property be unavailable, a similar alternative of equivalent standard will be arranged.*

What's included

What's included

- ✓ 11 nights in 4★ accommodations · all en-suite
- ✓ Continental breakfast at every hotel
- ✓ City taxes at all hotels
- ✓ Welcome dinner in a Palermo palazzo · Day 1
- ✓ Ballarò market street-food walking lunch · Day 2
- ✓ Aperitivo on the Trapani salt pans at sunset · Day 4
- ✓ Marsala DOC tasting in 19th-century cellars · Day 4
- ✓ Hands-on cooking class & dinner · a traditional Sicilian farm · Day 5
- ✓ Selinunte temples visit · Day 6
- ✓ Valle dei Templi guided visit at sunset · Day 7
- ✓ Maiolica workshop with master artisan · Day 8
- ✓ Etna nerello mascalese tasting & lunch · Day 9
- ✓ Teatro Antico di Taormina visit · Day 10
- ✓ Cefalù Norman Cathedral guided visit · Day 11
- ✓ Dinner in Cefalù · Day 11
- ✓ Private air-conditioned coach throughout
- ✓ Professional English-speaking tour leader (12 days)
- ✓ Local expert guides at all major sites
- ✓ Entrance fees to museums and archaeological sites included in the programme
- ✓ Collective airport transfers (arrival & departure — Palermo PMO), scheduled based on the most convenient flight times for the group
- ✓ Travel insurance — emergency medical expenses, baggage & trip cancellation (insurance broker terms & conditions apply)

Supplement for DUS (single occupancy) on request.

Not included

- × International flights to/from Palermo (PMO)
- × Lunches & dinners not specified above
- × Optional excursions & activities
- × Personal expenses, beverages outside meals
- × Visas, where applicable
- × Gratuities for guides, driver and tour leader
- × Entrance fees to museums or monuments not listed in the programme

Important notes

Group size: minimum 15 paying guests

Book this journey

Departures sell out by midsummer. Reserve your place to confirm.

RESERVE NOW

Carmelita Scholes · +1 540 226 5548



*Sicily is not just a destination.
It's a feeling.*

— GOETHE, AFTER ITALIAN JOURNEY

RESERVE YOUR PLACE

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