

*Sicily with
Friends*

Heart of Sicily Tour

Hands on Experience

2023 Itinerary

Thursday - September 21, 2023

Departure from US

Friday - September 22, 2023

Welcome to Sicily

*Transfer to **Castellammare del Golfo**. (Based on 3 arrival times)*

Upon your arrival at the **Palermo Airport**, you will be greeted by your private driver, who will take you to your hotel **Punta Nord Est** in Castellammare del Golfo. After arriving at your accommodations (Oceanfront balcony rooms), you will have time to relax and unwind. Later that afternoon we will take a walk to discover the main attraction of the town, it's soul and lifestyle, the best places for traditional pastries, ice-cream, coffee, food, and handcraft shopping. We will end this walking tour at the marina/harbor where we will enjoy a **Welcome Party** with hors d'oeuvres, and a specialty drink. Then you may explore this fascinating town on your own.

Included Meals: Hour D'oeuvres at Welcome Party

Saturday - September 23, 2023

Mazara del Vallo

After a relaxing morning we are off to explore with our private English tour guide to **Mazara del Vallo**. This town was founded in the ninth century BC by the Phoenicians, then became part of the Magna Graecia, later by Romans and in 827 by the Arabs, under their rule the town became the second important city after Palermo (the capitol of Sicily). Today Mazara del Vallo has the largest fishing fleet in Italy and offers a mix of culture, history, art, and ethnicity. We will visit the **Historic Kasbah Quarter** in the town center, also the beautiful **Piazza della Repubblica** and **Spanish Baroque Seminary** and the fascinating, bustling fishing harbor. We will return to Castellammare. This evening we will meet for dinner at this authentic restaurant while we savor a delicious Sicilian 3 course meal with local wines included.

Included Meals: Breakfast, and Dinner

Sunday - September 24, 2023

Palermo – Royal Palace and the 12th-century Palatine Chapel

This morning we will leave early to visit **Palermo** the capitol of Sicily. We will meet with our private tour guide for a special sightseeing tour of Palermo to admire some of the **UNESCO WORLD SITES** Your stops will include **Palermo Cathedral, Casa Professa, Quattro Canti, Piazza Pretoria** (where the famous fashion show of Dolce and Gabbana was held), **Chiesa Martorana, Mercato del Capo, Teatro Politeama, and Teatro Massimo**, (second largest stages in Europe and the famed opera houses.) We will learn the city's fascinating history and the many cultures. We will enter the **Royal Palace** and visit the jewel kept inside the 12th-century **Palatine Chapel** featuring stunning, shimmering mosaics and ceilings covered in spectacular wooden panels carved and painted by Arab craftsmen. We will pass through streets filled with outdoor markets like **Mercato Ballaro** one of the most historical market of Palermo full of color and folklore. Here you may enjoy some typical **Sicilian Street Food** such as "Pane Ca Meusa", "Pannelle" and the famous "Arancini". Back to Castellammare, this evening is at your leisure to explore.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Monday - September 25, 2023

Hands-on Pasta Making, Harvesting Grapes, visit the Winery with Wine Tasting and Lunch

Today we will leave Castellammare to go for a **NATURALISTIC WALK** among vineyards, olive trees, and lemon groves to discover the curiosities of the Sicilian countryside. Next, we will

head to the **GASTRONOMIC LABORATORY** with "**LE MANI IN PASTA**" making **Homemade Macaroni** from scratch with the help of our local housewife. We will witness the slow preparation of the "**MEAT SAUCE**". While that is cooking, we will visit the **Wine Cellar** on a guided tour to learn about ancient tools and modern methods, tasting of 2 wines from the vats, and the must from 2022. Next, we will have the pleasure to walk through the vineyard among the rows and **Harvesting the Grapes** then pressing in the press and drinking the grape juice, but also, we will press the grapes with our feet in the vats like in the old days. The highlight of the day will be that our **Lunch** is our creation of the day, along with some typical specialties and some Sicilian wines.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch,

Tuesday - September 26, 2023

Agrigento Temples – Scala dei Turchi

This morning our local specialist will take us in one of Sicily most famous historical attractions, the **Valley of the Temples**, (UNESCO HERITAGE SITE) just outside of Agrigento. This splendid archaeological park consists of eight temples built between 510 BC and 430 BC. The Temple of Hera, Concordia, Heracles, Olympia Zeus, Castor and Pollux, Hephaestus, Demeter, Asclepius (the God of Medicine) they are all situated along a rocky crest below modern-day Agrigento. After lunch on your own we will continue for **Scala dei Turchi** (Turkish steps) they are bright white rocky cliffs gleaming brilliantly under the Sicilian sun as they rise from the blue Mediterranean Sea. Back to Castellammare, this evening is at your leisure to explore.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Wednesday - September 27, 2023

Transfer to a Rural Farm for Cheese Making

Early this morning we will head to the mountains to a family-run farm **Antica Masseria** to learn how to make our fresh **Homemade Ricotta Cheese**. This experience is well worth the early wake up as we savor these authentic Sicilian flavors for lunch. Later get ready for a very special sightseeing tour of this amazing coastline of the Mediterranean Sea to the **Belvedere** for a photo opportunity. Next, we will stroll through the

village of **Scopello** where you will have time on your own to explore. Back to Castellammare, this evening we will meet for dinner at this authentic local restaurant with a beautiful view of the marina, while we savor a delicious Sicilian multi course meal with local wines included.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Thursday September 28, 2023

Hands-on Bread Making, Prepare Cannoli and Harvesting Olive's

After a relaxing morning, we are off to experience this afternoon at this **Organic Farm** where we will have the pleasure to stroll through the olive groves to **Harvest the Olives**. After a brief introduction on the olive trees and benefits of extra virgin olive oil, you are actively involved in laying the nets under the trees and harvesting the olives in the appropriate baskets and we will witness the pressing of the olives in our small oil mill. Once you have relaxed it is time to learn how to make **Traditional Sicilian Bread**, we will head to the **GASTRONOMIC LABORATORY** with "**LE MANI IN PASTA**". We will learn every step and do them yourself from mixing the ingredients to kneading the dough with the help of our local housewife. After this extraordinary experience we will enjoy the tasting of the new olive oil with our hot homemade bread along with olives and olive pate'. We will complete this unique day with an authentic **Sicilian Lunch with Wines**. This will be the most memorable, fun and hands-on way to spend an afternoon in a local farm to enjoy an authentic culinary experience.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch,

Friday September 29, 2023

Walking tour of Erice, Marsala Wineries with Wine Tasting and Farm to Table Experience

Today we will leave Castellammare for a sightseeing tour of **Erice**. This medieval town sits 2400 meters above sea level. Enjoy the views of the Tyrrhenian Sea from the hilltop and explore Erice's charming medieval streets and square and pleasure your palate with traditional Sicilian desserts where you will have the opportunity to purchase local souvenirs and enjoy lunch on your own. The bus will take us along the coast of Marsala where lies this evocative landscape of **Le Saline** (shallow salt pools) and decommissioned

mulini (windmills). The salt from these marshes is considered Italy's finest. We will continue to the town of Marsala where we will tour this magnificent eighteen century **Marsala Winery** which will leave you speechless. The English guided tour will take us through this journey that will begin in front of these majestic giant wine barrels, built at the end of the nineteenth century and still used for the refinement of Marsala. We will walk beneath 104 stone arches through the barrel vaults to see over 2000 small and large barrels of wine. After the tour we will reach the grandiose and elegant tasting room, where we will taste a range of their best wines paired with authentic gastronomic nibbles. This evening we will drive through the Sicilian countryside for this authentic **Farm to Table Experience** where we will enjoy homemade specialties and wines. Sit down for a unique, Sicilian dinner using produce that was grown on the hosts' organic farm. Tour the farm, learn about life in Sicily, and have dinner together in this beautiful setting.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Saturday September 30, 2023

Departure to the US

Transfers to the airport

NB: Excursions and Itinerary are weather permitted and subject to change without prior notice.

Minimum number is required.

NNB: We love to share our Sicily with you. To secure low rates, we prepay everything a year in advance.

One Visit is Never Enough!

Phone: (717) 903-0177 / Email: info@sicilywithfriends.com

2023 Prices

\$3800 per person (double occupancy) Special rate available (bring 4 and each pay \$3200)

Single occupancy \$500 surcharge

You may upgrade to a suit for an additional \$350 per person, based on availability

Land only, Airfare not included in price

Deposits are required within 10 days of making the registration Please

see ***Terms & Conditions***

Pre and Post Tour Extensions available contact us directly via email.

(A 2.9% fee will be charged on debit/credit card payments. If you would like to pay by cash or check, please email us at info@sicilywithfriends.com to make arrangements.)