



Adventurebug Worldwide Ltd

Bespoke adventure travel & events since 2000

REAT Tourism License AT/MA/00022 Company Registration B93050763
Apto. Correos 1031, 29680 Estepona, Malaga, SPAIN TEL (34) 635 817 819

Sicily & The Aeolian Islands on Foot



The breath-taking island of Sicily is home to volcanic landscapes, beautiful architecture, delightful cuisine and wines, a rich culture and a labyrinth of footpaths surrounded by sweeping views of the Mediterranean Sea. Just off the mainland, the Aeolian Islands are a magical volcanic archipelago surrounded by azure seas and centuries old traditions. We welcome you to discover the best of Sicily with us as we combine diverse hiking days with cultural explorations in rural landscapes and seemingly untouched nature. This is

the Mediterranean at its best and our daily explorations bring you into the heart of Sicily.

From ancient Catania we visit north Sicily's famous mountain parks while lodging at breath-taking coastal towns nestled in sandy coves. Enjoy medieval architecture and delicious gastronomy prepared with fresh local ingredients. On the Aeolian Islands, we'll hike up the crater of Vulcano before discovering the charms of Lipari. On Stromboli an evening hike with a local expert to the crater of Europe's most active volcano will hopefully produce a fire show like no other! Back on the mainland, we'll explore the Greek Amphitheatre of Taormina followed by a hike to the hill-top medieval village of Castelmona, before finishing the adventure with a cable car

journey and hike on the slopes of mighty Etna, a UNESCO World Heritage site. This Sicilian hiking adventure offers the perfect mix of daily hikes and cultural highlights on an island adorned with abundant treasures waiting to be uncovered. **We welcome you on Adventurebug's own Sicily hiking and Island Adventure Tour!**



WHAT TO EXPECT & HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 nights comfortable accommodation in 3 and 4-star hotels (many with swimming pools and beach locations)
- Tasty meals organized for you (as per itinerary)
- Move around the region via private transfers in our group tour bus and hydrofoil ferries to the islands
- A comprehensive circular tour of Sicily – including the fabulous volcanic Aeolian Island group!
- All tipping is included (except for optional housekeeping and bag portage services)
- Hiking routes in both village and natural park landscapes
- Entrance fees and tickets arranged for all main historic sites, wine tasting and museums
- Local English-speaking guides where applicable
- A wide range of experiences that are suitable to all levels and flexibility in the daily hikes where this is possible



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ITINERARY



Day 1– Arrive to Catania, Sicily

Meals included: welcome dinner

Accommodation: TBA Catania (central historical quarter)

Activities:

Your journey will start in Catania, eastern Sicily's historic fishing port sprawled along the eastern flanks of Mount Etna. Today you can self-explore this wonderful Sicilian city – taking in the charming medieval quarter and Baroque architecture within the UNESCO protected old town. This evening we'll meet your adventure leaders for an orientation

before having a welcome dinner of Sicilian local delicacies and tasty wine – Benvenuto a Italia!



Day 2 – Hiking the Madonie National Reserve

Meals included: breakfast, trail lunch, dinner

Accommodation: Hotel TBA, Cefalu (costal / beach location)

Activities:

This morning we set off for the Parco Delle Madonie – a protected forest reserve of low-lying coastal mountains that contains over a dozen rural villages dating back a millennium. Travel is approximately 2 hours by coach before starting a half day hike exploring rural landscapes and a rich biodiversity. and offers insight of Sicily's authentic rural

landscapes. Later this afternoon we'll drive to the wonderful coastal destination, Cefalu where we'll have 2 nights near the sea.

HIKING DISTANCE: 3-4 miles approximately

ELEVATION GAIN: 500-750 feet

TECHNICAL RATING: Medium – Closed shoes advised and hiking poles. Hiking on forestry tracks and some rural lanes.

Day 3 – Cefalu Coastal Hike & Ascent of La Rocca

Meals included: breakfast, trail lunch

Accommodation: Same as previous night

Activities:

Cefalu is a gorgeous sun-swept coastal location flanked by hills and backed by the Madonie Mountain Park. Today we'll explore the entire region on foot – including seeing the medieval architecture and the 12th century Norman Cathedral containing



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Byzantine mosaics. A highlight of today's hike is the ascent of La Rocca (45 min approx) to capture views across the coastline from this panoramic location where an Arabic Citadel once stood. Later take a dip in the crystal-clear sea near our hotel or self-explore more of the old town to complete your day. Dinner is not included tonight – allowing you the chance to experiment with a charming local eatery! **HIKING DISTANCE:** 4 miles approximately plus some explorations on foot of the historic quarter and surrounding coastline.

ELEVATION GAIN: 750 feet

TECHNICAL RATING: Moderate with mixed terrain and 750 foot ascent. Hiking poles and supportive shoes recommended.



Day 4 – Hiking Nebrodi Nature Park

Meals included: breakfast, trail lunch

Accommodation: Hotel Milazzo (TBA)

Activities:

This morning we travel to the Natural Park region known as Nebrodi. This giant forest reserve encompasses a large part of north central Sicily and is famous for its protection of flora and fauna species, particularly beechwood, small mammals and birds of

prey. Nebrodi has a number of access points but internally the park is very remote and rugged. We visit some unique landscapes of the north where many of the rivers form gorges and valleys leading to the Tironian Sea. Our hike today follows ancient drover paths, forestry roads and involves walking in a rural mountain village setting. After our hike we transfer an hour to the access point for the Aeolian Islands, the port of Milazzo. Here we have one night within walking distance to the ferry.

HIKING DISTANCE: 3-5 miles approximately

ELEVATION GAIN: approximately 800 to possibly 1000 feet (options exist)

TECHNICAL RATING: Moderate hike over mixed terrain and hilly countryside.



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Day 5 – Vulcano Hike and The Aeolian Island Group

Meals included: breakfast, trail lunch and dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Lipari TBA

Activities: Today we hop on the hydrofoil (fast ferry) to the neighbouring island of Vulcano, the most southerly of the Aeolian Islands. Famed for its visibly smoking crater and black lava beaches, we'll enjoy a hike up to its crater where we are rewarded with excellent views over Sicily and neighbouring islands.



After the crater rim we'll explore the famous black beaches and there will be time for an optional visit to some mud pools and hot springs for a spot of relaxing. These sulphur mud pools are popular with locals and the first thing you'll notice is the strong sulphuric odour of the naturally-warmed mud. Once in, it's very relaxing and a quick shower post soak leaves you feeling very relaxed. Part of the experience are the hot springs which are located in the sea next to the pools. Late afternoon we leave Vulcano and take the hydrofoil (10mins) to neighbouring Lipari. This is our base for the next 2 nights.

HIKING DISTANCE: 5 miles

ELEVATION GAIN: 1000 feet

TECHNICAL RATING: Moderate with stone paths, uneven terrain and light scrambling. Hiking poles and solid shoes advised.



Day 6 – Lipari Island Free Exploration Day

Meals included: breakfast only today

Accommodation: Same hotel as previous night

Activities: Today is an opportunity to choose your own adventure at a pace that suits

you – there are no scheduled activities today. Lipari is perfect for both relaxing and/or exploring the natural attractions of the largest island in the Aeolian group. From our cozy hotel near the old town, you can enjoy the pool terrace or beach areas, explore the surrounding architecture and the Eoliano Archeological Museum with 6000 years of human history. If nature beckons you, stroll past the caper and olive growers and sample the island vino from a small vineyard. There are gentle hikes to excellent swimming and snorkel beaches and up to viewpoints and geological sites. Today is a day to contemplate Sicily and your own adventure so far. Taking it all in at your own pace like the locals do is a way of understanding what makes life so balanced here...Today only breakfast is provided – leaving you to source out locally produced gastronomic delights!



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Day 7 – Stromboli Evening Volcano Ascent

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Stromboli (TBA)

Activities:

Today we embark on possibly one of the most fascinating volcano ascents on the planet! For many Stromboli is the most captivating of the islands with its symmetrical, smoking silhouette rising dramatically from the sea. The island has

been inhabited for thousands of years with life based on farming the fertile ground near the shores, and fishing. Due to a big eruption in 1930 which damaged buildings, many of the islanders departed and the population dwindled. The island is home to a number of fishermen, but most of the local population make a living from tourism or as mountain guides on volcano excursions.

After a ferry transfer and checking in at our hotel, we take a stroll on the island's black volcanic beaches, grabbing some lunch locally and relaxing until the afternoon when we climb the volcano. The ascent of Stromboli's volcano (2800 feet) is magnificent and we'll be accompanied by an official volcano guide (*please note Stromboli cannot be climbed if a major eruption is happening*). As we start, we cross open grassland before reaching the upper slopes of lava and ash scree. As we get closer to the crater's viewpoint we should be subjected to Stromboli's eruptions accompanied by rumbles from within the mountain which is very impressive! Tonight we'll be descending in the dark with head lamps (please bring a reliable one). The island's star show above is also second to none!

HIKING DISTANCE: 6 miles total approximately

ELEVATION GAIN: 2800 feet

TECHNICAL RATING: Moderate with varying terrain involving scree, vegetation, stony paths and dry lava formations underfoot. Hiking poles and solid shoes advised. Night walking with lights necessary.



Day 8 – Taormina and Castelmona Medieval Village & Greek Theatre

Meals included: breakfast only today

Accommodation: Hotel Catania TBA

Activities:

This morning we ferry back to the mainland and visit one of the most striking hill top villages in all of Italy, Taormina. Here we'll

explore the historic centre and wonderful Greek Amphitheatre that is perched literally between sea and sky! Constructed in the 3rd Century BC, it's considered the most dramatically built Greek theatre in the world. Taormina itself is a sublime mix of Arab, Norman and Gothic buildings including battlements, decorated windows and leafy courtyards. An hours' hike over lanes and



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ancient paving stones climbs us further to Castelmona – a fortified medieval village nestled inland from Taormina where we can sample the famous almond wine (Vino Alle Mandorle) from a terrace overlooking Mt. Etna's summit and the surrounding mountain and coastal landscapes. Late this afternoon we'll transfer (50 min), to our hotel in Catania where we spend the final two nights.

HIKING DISTANCE: 3-4 miles total approximately

ELEVATION GAIN: 900 feet

TECHNICAL RATING: Largely rural village walking with some sections over ancient cobbled paths. Solid footwear and poles.

Day 9 – Mount Etna Cable Car Hike & Vineyard Visit

Meals included: breakfast, trail lunch and farewell dinner

Accommodation: Same hotel as previous night

Activities:

This morning we depart Catania and transfer (1hr) to the south slopes of Mount Etna. Dominating the Sicilian landscape, Etna is enormous (10,920 feet) and the highest mountain in Italy south of the Alps. Since 1987 the volcano and its slopes have been part of the Parco del



Etna, a lunar landscape of black lava and beech woods. Approaching by vehicle 6230 feet, we reach the Rifugio Sapienza and are rewarded with a fantastic panorama of the Sicilian coast and Etna's craters. From here, providing conditions are favourable, we'll ascend by cable car to 8200 feet and hike gently for few hours ascending to the Torre del Filosofo at 9580 feet - *here is the maximum permitted hiking limit without requesting*

a technical alpine guide. Returning the same way to the Rifugio, we then drive down to explore a local vineyard on the slopes of Etna enjoying a tasting before returning to Catania for our farewell group dinner!

HIKING DISTANCE: 4 miles approximately

ELEVATION GAIN: 1400 feet (up to 8200 feet elevation) **this is our highest elevation reached on tour*

TECHNICAL RATING: Moderate – the hike between the top of cable car to the Torre del Filosofo is via a 4x4 track with some variations of single hiking trails along the way. Footing is generally good and the terrain is not steep – but openly exposed to the sun and wind. Wear solid hiking footwear and bring poles for this final hike.





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Day 10 – Departure Day (from Catania)

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: None included

After breakfast you can depart for the airport or onward travels. Transfers to the airport are not included and there are a number of economical options – shared taxi booked from the hotel is the easiest and most direct method. Extension visits to Sicily that you may consider are:

Syracuse coastal city and wonderful historical center

Agrigento city and the Valley of the Temples

Palermo city and the Natural Reserve of Zingaro

Renting a car and driving the south – west circuit to Palermo

*Visiting **Corleone** city – the heart of Italian Mafia history and where a museum is dedicated to all things mob related.*

YOUR TRIP – WHAT TO KNOW

This trip can be enjoyed by just about anyone with a reasonable level of fitness and day hiking experience. The longest hike is approximately 6 miles while most average 4-6 miles. There are ALWAYS options to sit out and, in some cases, hike only part way under the assistance of our guiding team. (subject to routing, trail conditions, weather, etc): Trail conditions range from gentle town / village cultural walks to hiking trails in national forests, steeper rocky canyons, coastal rambles and of course ascents of volcanos. This trip is best defined as a day hiking excursion and participants should come prepared. By no means is this a trekking holiday but more of a “discovery” hiking tour. Solid hiking shoes or light boots with ankle support and hiking poles recommended for all the hikes with the exception of the few town / city discovery walks.

What's included in the Tour

- 9 nights hotel accommodation twin or double share (SINGLE rooms subject to availability)
- All meals as per itinerary: (9 Breakfasts, 5 Trail Lunches, 5 Dinners including wine/beer/soft drinks)
- All transfers as per itinerary (Please note – airport transfers to/from **Catania Airport** are not included)
- All ferry connections as per itinerary
- Entrance fees as per itinerary including cable car services on Mount Etna
- Local guide services as per itinerary
- Professional outfitter and guide throughout
- Tips for all included meals, transfers / drivers and local guides where applicable
- Regional taxes, tourism taxes, permits and associated agency fees

Not Included

- International flights (to/from Sicily)
- Participants international arrival and departure transfers in Sicily (connections are easily made)
- Housekeeping (optional) tips *all other main tips are included.
- Travel insurance – it is (compulsory to have personal travel and medical insurance)
- Meals (where not listed as included in the itinerary)
- Optional additional tours or activities during free time (we will provide guidelines for all options offered)



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Non-included Meals

Some meals are not included on our tour (please refer to itinerary). We feel you'll benefit from getting out and discovering the local cuisine. So when a meal is not included, it's a great opportunity to try something new. Your guide will offer tips on where to get the best meal, or you might decide to dine out as a group and experience the fun together. For lunches not included, sometimes a stop in the local market or small stores offer the best choice and healthiest range of food. We encourage this because it helps support the local economies apart from the cafes and restaurants normally used.

Insurance & waiver release form

You are required to have travel insurance before taking part on this tour. We strongly recommend cancellation insurance as well as normal coverage for health, evacuation and medical issues. A signed waiver release form must be submitted as part of the registration procedure for this excursion.

Responsible Travel

Adventurebug's *Responsible Travel Ethos* is at the heart of everything we do, from getting the basics right like respecting local cultures, customs and the natural environment, to initiating projects that make positive contributions to communities - to our staff's volunteer efforts on a wide range of events and projects. Regarding **single-use plastics** (water bottles, straws, plastic cutlery / plates, etc), we strongly encourage our participants to avoid these wasteful items to protect our environment and reduce unsustainable waste management.

Customs and Culture

Sicily is in many ways a modern, European region and at the same time, very backwards compared to what you are used to. Customer service, public opening/closing and mealtimes, street noise, smoking in some public places, driving and more may appear very different from home! We encourage you to adjust to the timings that Sicily evolves around. Don't come to Sicily expecting the same service and mannerisms typical of home - you may be disappointed. Instead, come with an open mind and take everything in stride - you wouldn't be travelling to foreign lands if you expected everything to be the same as home! The Sicilians love to share their land, culture, traditions and gastronomy with visitors. They have immense patience, especially in the rural areas to meet visitors' quirky demands and they deserve our respect and tolerance as well.

Special Dietary Needs, Potable Water and Medicines

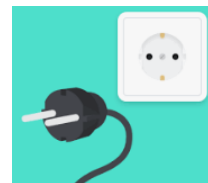
Vegetarian diets can generally be accommodated to with ease, but don't be surprised if fish is offered to you as a vegetarian... Sicily retains an old-world mentality in many places - especially on the islands. Special diets such as gluten free (celiac) and lactose intolerance can be limited in variety so we recommended you bring supplements from home just in case. Please note, drinking water from the tap on Sicily's mainland is ok (unless stated locally that it's not!), The Aeolian Islands however DO NOT have potable water from the taps. Medicines and glasses / contacts prescriptions we strongly recommend you bring from home as resources can be very scarce on the islands.

SICILY arrival and departure Information

Our tour begins and ends in Catania in eastern Sicily. Catania-Fontanarossa Airport (Code CTA), also named as Vincenzo Bellini Airport, is an international airport 2.3 miles southwest of Catania, the second largest city on the island. It is named after the opera composer Vincenzo Bellini who was born in Catania itself. Palermo, the busier capital city of the state is a 2-hour drive across the island. Organize your flight connections to/from Catania - unless you are planning some extension visits on your own post tour or perhaps wishing to travel north up the mainland of Italy.

Communication / Internet / Electrical Supply

Sicily is a modernized region when it comes to communication. Internet (via WIFI), is found in all hotels and nearly all public cafes, etc. Cell phone cover via Italy's principal telecom servers are widespread in Sicily (limited cover obviously in mountainous terrain away from towers). Sicily's power supply is the same as mainland Italy & central Europe - 220-230 volts. The plug is as such:



EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, your local operator, Adventurebug Worldwide can be reached as follows:

OFFICE (Adventurebug)

+ 34 952 894 308 / + 34 635 817 819 info@adventurebug.com