



Splendours of Sicily 2025

Nibble on freshly shaped cheese as buffaloes swing their tails in the distance. Step back to a time when ancient Greeks roamed the earth as their stories are spoken through locals. And witness the trembling glory that is Mount Etna – one of the most active volcanoes in the world. On this expertly crafted tour of splendid Sicily, every day begs a new journey, and a question... What memories will we carve on the cobbled paths before us?





About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey. We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

Important: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

Hotel Plaza Opera @ 18:00

Via Nicolò Gallo, 2, Palermo, 90139

NH Catania Centro @ 13:00

Piazza Trento, 13, Catania, 95129



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Tour highlights

- ✓ Stroll through Palermo with a local guide and gain a unique insight into the city's anti-Mafia movement
- ✓ Discover the fascinating history behind the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Valley of Temples
- ✓ Sample rich Sicilian flavours like almonds and cannoli through several soul-stirring tasting experiences

More inclusions

- ✓ 9 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 3 dinners
- ✓ 9 nights in thoughtfully selected accommodation
- ✓ Luxury minicoach

Currencies you'll use

- Italy - EUR



Included meals

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.

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Your itinerary

Day 1 | Palermo (Sicily)

Settle in for your journey through Sicily. We'll meet at its capital, Palermo: a breath of intoxicating contrasts where locals greet you with a warm, welcoming smile. Gaze at monuments that have stood the test of time whilst lively markets with swirls of spicy scents line adjacent streets. This evening, we'll come together for our first group dinner, sampling delicious local Sicilian cuisine. *Salute!*

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Plaza Opera (or similar)



Meals

+ Dinner

Day 2 | Palermo – Monreale – Selinunte

Pull back the hotel curtains, your first morning in Sicily awaits. As birds chirp in the distance, ready yourself for a walking tour of the city. But this is no ordinary tour – it's filled with secrets, power and an elusive ruthlessness that evades law and order. We are, of course, talking about the Mafia, or specifically Palermo's anti-Mafia movement – and the brave Sicilians who defended their home. With a visit to the house of anti-Mafia magistrate Paolo Borsellino and a local guide sharing tales that date back decades, you'll learn the truth not shown on the big screen.

Perched atop the Monte Caputo – overlooking the fertile valley of La Conca d'Oro – Monreale reigns with regal beauty. At its renowned cathedral, time will stop as we admire the Norman-Byzantine architecture and intricate mosaics.

Afterwards, follow the scent of fresh tomatoes, melted cheese and baked swordfish – it's time to find lunch! Our final stop of the day is Selinunte – hailing from Magna Graecia, and home to our rustic accommodation, it's the ideal place to put your feet up after an eventful day!

Included today



Accommodation

Agriturismo Case di Latomie (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

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Day 3 | Selinunte – Agrigento – Favara

Awakening in the middle of an olive grove can only mean one thing: an olive oil tasting! As the sun warms your face and a gentle morning breeze tugs your t-shirt, settle at a hotel table with your friendly group and wait for the award-winning, golden liquid to be served. Tastebuds teased, we'll alight the minicoach for our drive towards Agrigento. Along the way, your expert Tour Leader may opt to stop at a local spot or two – sharing their personal knowledge and passion for the island that holds a special place in their heart.

And what awaits us in Agrigento? One of the most impressive collections of ancient Greek monuments in the world, the Valley of the Temples... A place where the mighty Gods and Goddesses descended to make their presence known in a time of blood, battle and prayer. Here, temples shine like gold when Helio, the ancient god of sun and light, angles the sun just right. Wander between ridged columns, touching stone that's felt the air caress it over thousands of years.

Favara is where we'll rest tonight, after a group dinner filled with seasonal dishes and excited chatter about the days we've experienced so far.

Included today



Accommodation

The Alba Palace Hotel (or similar)



Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



Day 4 | Favara – Piazza Armerina – Ragusa

Swap your sun hats for history caps this morning – the beating heart of Piazza Armerina calls: Villa Romana del Casale, located a stone's throw from town. Among the ruins of this 4th-century palace lies a web of Roman mosaics – each one illustrating a different vision of the past. Discover tigers, horses, battles and other intricate creations – which will intrigue you most?

Standing tall atop a hill between two deep valleys lies Ragusa, our home for the next two nights. Watch the sun kissing architecture as it begins to set behind distant hills. Breathe in natural fragrances such as sharp citrus groves and sweet jasmine blooms that mingle with the enticing aromas of fresh pasta, seafood and arancini cooked by locals. And seek trinkets to take home as a vibrant reminder of your journey spent with us.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Antico Convento dei
Cappuccini (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

Day 5 | Ragusa – Modica – Ragusa

Do you have a sweet tooth? If yes, you'll be delighted by today's experience. If not, we're sure you'll come around. It's a chocolate tasting session in Modica, but that's not all. Here, you'll gain insight into a unique charity project where local people are hired to learn the chocolatier trade.

From chocolate to cheese, our journey takes us to a local farm where buffaloes roam. We'll meet the sturdy creatures who produce the milk and learn the secrets behind the famed *provola ragusana* cheese. Then, settle in for a buffalo mozzarella tasting, complete with a colourful platter of vegetables (and a sampling of the region's wines – naturally!).

Later, we'll wind back to the spirited city of Ragusa. Here, the rest of the day is yours to explore! Wander through twisting alleyways – a glimpse of local life at every turn. Witness local families sharing a lengthy lunch where food never stops flowing. And settle in a piazza with a hearty dish of your own as the sky turns pink above.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Antico Convento dei
Cappuccini (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

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Day 6 | Ragusa – Noto – Syracuse

Sip your espresso and eat your brioche before finding your seat aboard our luxury minicoach this morning. We're heading to Noto, a city that captures the power Baroque architecture exudes. This morning's topic: almonds! As our local guide shares how the famed fruit is grown here – and have since Romans times – we'll stroll along paved paths, pass lively coffee shops and crane our necks before the Baroque-style Cathedral of St. Nicholas that stands proud. Keeping on theme of the gentle sweetness that is an almond, we'll enjoy a tasting for our lunch, clinking glasses of almond milk, too – will this inspire you to introduce almond milk at home, we wonder?

Prepare to slow the pace even more during our stay in Syracuse. Here, visitors and locals alike stroll along the waterfront as a gentle breeze swirls in the air, or pass by honey-coloured buildings, peeking inside open windows. We'll take a wander through the archaeological park with a local guide, admiring the Teatro Greco – a 5th-century theatre, and hear tales that entwine like tendrils around each monument. After, allow the scent of sweet and sour flavours lure you back to the town centre and discover your next Sicilian meal as the inky blue of night ascends.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Domus Mariae
Benessere (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast
+ Lunch



Day 7 | Syracuse

Today, the chief Greek city of ancient Sicily – which rivalled glorious Athens in the old empire – is yours for the taking. Where will this part of your journey take you? We have some suggestions! Feel the spirit of the ancient Greeks flow through you on a boat trip across the Ionian Sea and scour hidden caves for their secrets. See Sicilian stories come to life through a puppet show, where atmosphere, improvisation and humour collide. Descend to the underground labyrinth where the almost-forgotten Jewish community's past lingers within its stone. Or lose yourself in the city's winding streets where the hum of life welcomes you in a warm embrace. How you spend your day is your choice – but perhaps eating *stimpirata* or *frittura di paranza* like a local is on the cards today, and a little *dolce far niente* too!

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Domus Mariae
Benessere (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 8 | Syracuse – Mt Etna – Etna Region

Wave a fond *arrivederci* to Syracuse, our journey today will take our eyes skyward. Their focus: the slumbering giant called Mount Etna where Zeus imprisoned the giant Typhon beneath its immovable surface. We'll stop at Rifugio Sapienza, the ideal spot to take in views of the mountain's wild glory. Rake your eyes across extinct craters, cragged lines (where lava has stormed through in fiery rage) and its ominous peak. An opportunity to venture closer to Etna's bold spirit is available via cable car – our only question, does the thrill of the mountain entice you forward?

Our next stop: stretches of lush vineyards that billow with the scent of grapes at every stage of life, from youthful seeds to ripened prime. Rooted in land since the 18th century through ten generations, our setting for lunch and wine is as welcoming as it is traditional. After satisfying our stomachs, we'll descend into the dimmed wine cellar where the past melts into the present. Later, we'll make tracks towards our hotel which slumbers in the foothills of Etna, surrounded by finely cut grass and trees that rustle in the late afternoon breeze. Here, we'll spend two nights – making full use of the spa facilities to relax!

Included today



Accommodation

Il Picciolo Etna Golf Resort &
Spa (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast
+ Lunch

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Day 9 | Etna Region – Taormina – Etna Region

As sunlight dances in your room, stretch your arms and ready yourself for another venture. This time, we're visiting Taormina, a city founded in 400 BC. You'll certainly feel like you've stepped into the past at its ancient Greek theatre, sitting at the top of a hill like a domineering god on their throne. Settle in the moment to imagine gladiators fighting to the death and dramatic performances entertaining thousands of people. It is still used for concerts to this day, but we're sure no blood is spilled!

We'll wind back to town where free time is our friend for the remainder of the day. Stroll through Corso Umberto, Taormina's main street, filled with the sounds of friends sharing gossip, wine sloshing into glasses at local restaurants, and shopping bags rustling as locals go about their daily life. And hunt down your favourite Sicilian snack one last time before you return home. After a day of exploring, we'll settle into the hotel restaurant for our farewell dinner. Swap tales of your favourite days, the moments that wouldn't be possible with anyone else, and the memories (and snacks!) that'll be tucked in your heart for the rest of time.

Included today



Accommodation

Il Picciolo Etna Golf Resort &
Spa (or similar)



Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



Day 10 | Etna Region – Catania

It's our final day, but first, we'll have the opportunity to stretch our legs during a walking tour of Catania. Nestled at the foot of Mount Etna, the historic and scenic veins of this ancient port city have been shaped by its volcanic sibling. As our local guide shares influences passed through Greek, Roman, Arab, and Byzantine époques, spinning a tale of colour and magic, we'll wander towards the city's famous fish market. What awaits? Bartering in Italian so fast your head will become a tennis umpire's, slaps of sounds as fishmongers work with dexterous fingers and variety like you've never seen.

Before we part ways, there is one last sweet treat to devour! Huddled in the city lies a pâtisserie that has been passed from grandfather to the last daughter of the family, creating a family history spanning 50 years. Here, we'll fill our very own cannoli – a classic Sicilian dessert that effortlessly mixes crunch and creaminess. Alongside our ricotta cheese-filled cannoli will be servings of granita, a semi-frozen dessert that shocks the senses. And with that, your journey with us comes to an end. We hope your Sicilian journey was as satisfying as our final sweet treat together!

Included today



Meals

+ Breakfast



Travel advice

Finances

Changing money

Cash: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

Credit cards: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

Cash machines: ATMS are widely available.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our [FAQ page](#).

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain



countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

Please note: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires x mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).



Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Most accommodation we stay in will offer free Wi-Fi as well as many restaurants and cafes you may visit. If you would like more regular internet access without large roaming fees, you can purchase a Back-Roads Touring eSIM [here](#).



What to Pack

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads Touring tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

Clothing

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Sun hat | ✓ Long-sleeved tops | ✓ Light jacket |
| ✓ Sunglasses | ✓ Short-sleeved tops | ✓ Waterproof jacket |
| ✓ Sleepwear | ✓ Shorts/skirts | ✓ Trousers |
| ✓ Warm jacket | ✓ Socks | ✓ Swimwear |
| ✓ Underwear | ✓ Smart casual evening wear | ✓ Walking/comfortable shoes |

Other essentials

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| ✓ Multi-use adapter plug | ✓ Toiletries | ✓ Camera |
| ✓ Batteries | ✓ Sunscreen | ✓ Towel |
| ✓ Umbrella | ✓ Reusable water bottle | ✓ Insect repellent |
| ✓ Any personal medication | ✓ Basic medical kit (paracetamol, aspirin, plasters etc) | |

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How much luggage can I bring

As we travel in mini-coaches, luggage space is limited. Here's what you can take with you on tour:



1 x suitcase



1 x small carry-on bag
(backpack or handbag)

If you have more luggage, please make arrangements to store it prior to joining the tour. **We are unable to carry extra luggage on the mini-coach.**

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FAQs

What's the weather like?

The weather in southern Italy varies depending on the time of year. Generally, summers are hot and dry, and from mid-June to the end of August temperatures can reach 40°C (104°F), so sun hats and sunscreen are essential!

Southern Italian winters are mild and wet but can experience intense drops in temperature during the coldest months.

Which type of hotels will we stay in?

Our thoughtfully selected accommodation is full of charm and historic details – expect elegant country inns, grand town centre hotels and even the odd castle! For this reason, rooms vary in size, and most hotels don't have lifts – meaning you'll likely need to access your room via stairs. Porterage will be included wherever possible.

Although air conditioning is mostly unavailable in historic buildings, fans will be provided during hot spells. Most hotels have bathtubs with overhead showers (rather than walk-in showers), so you'll be able to enjoy a soak at the end of the day. Kettles and coffee machines aren't usually included in rooms, but there's no shortage of places to grab an espresso!

How much walking can I expect to do?

Whilst we do cover ground in our minicoach to maximise our time, the best way to truly discover Italy is on foot! Many of the historic town centres we visit are mostly pedestrian-only – like Syracuse – inviting us to freely explore their hidden corners. For that reason, sometimes we'll need to walk 20 minutes or so to and from our minicoach's parking spot. Combined with our guided walking tours, which typically last for around two hours or more, we'd say that's the perfect excuse for an extra gelato at the end of the day!



Is my Tour Leader a local guide who can speak the language?

All Back-Roads Tour Leaders are either local to the area or have extensive local knowledge of the regions they work in. If they're not native speakers, they'll be able to speak the language at a proficient level, ready to share words and phrases you may find useful along your journey.

That's everything!

We can't wait to welcome you on tour.

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