

Sicily and the Aeolian Islands

Departs
15th September 2025

Blue Dot Travel



\$14,490 pp

Twin-share,
excludes flights
Single supp \$1,900



SICILY AND THE AEOLIAN ISLANDS

Sicily is billed as perhaps the world's first true cosmopolitan, multi-racial society. Asians, Africans and Europeans have all ruled this island at various stages. Forget your impression left by *The Godfather*... Sicily is a friendly, vibrant, bustling island fringed with golden orchards, lush forests and the unforgettable soaring Mount Etna. If you love history and quaint villages, you cannot help but fall in love with Sicily – the Mediterranean's largest island.

The capital city – Palermo – could be considered wonderfully chaotic, with vespers on the streets heading in each direction on the wrong side of the road. The food in throughout the region is, simple, but delicious. You won't be disappointed.

The Aeolian Islands lie in the Tyrrhenian Sea off the north coast of Sicily and near Italy's "foot". They comprise of a volcanic archipelago of 8 islands, with Mt Stromboli - on the island of Stromboli - being highly active over the years. At night time, a spectacular display of lava and fire is not uncommon. The largest of the islands is Lipari which, in the middle of summer, attracts many tourists from the mainland. On our tour, you will visit each of the main islands but stay in the one hotel for the 6 nights making it easy to get around. You'll leave with a clear understanding of the local's culture and way of life.



Departure, Monday 15th September
Transit

Depart Australia for your flight to Palermo, Sicily's capital city. All flights to be advised.



Day 1, Tuesday 16th September
PALERMO

Arrival at Palermo airport and private transfer to the hotel. The tour of Sicily starts with time to discover Palermo and its beauty. Dinner will be at a

local restaurant. We stay in the capital for three nights. **D**

Day 2, Wednesday 17th September
PALERMO – MONREALE

After breakfast, the morning will be spent visiting the core sights of Palermo, one of the richest places on the island for history and art. Palermo stands on a bay dominated by Mount Pellegrino. While the Baroque predominates, a profusion of different architectural styles reflects the city's multicultural past: Punic walls, Art Nouveau villas, noble residences, 17th-century squares, and an elegant opera house. Visit the wonderful eclectic Cathedral, the astonishing Martorana Church, and the amazing Cappella Palatina, admirable examples from a

historical and an artistic point of view and proof of how different cultures, religions, and ways of thinking can coexist. Along the path, you will admire the famous Teatro Massimo and the debated fountain in Pretoria Square, situated in the ancient Kalsa area and adorned with 16th-century sculptures. Later, you will discover the stunning Monreale, its huge Norman Cathedral, proclaimed the Eighth Wonder of the World, and its splendid Cloister in Arab-Norman style: an admirable masterpiece of art, sculpture, and semi-precious stones marquetry. Dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight in Palermo **B/D**



Day 3, Thursday 18th September
PALERMO – CEFALU

After breakfast, the group will transfer to Cefalù, a charming Medieval town on the northern coast of Sicily. We'll explore the little village and its stunning Norman Dome with a local guide. There'll be some free time for lunch and shopping before heading back to Palermo. We suggest lunch at one of the many gorgeous restaurants by the sea. Return to Palermo before gathering for dinner. **B/D**



Day 4, Friday 19th September SEGESTA – ERICE

The group will transfer to Trapani today. On arrival, we'll visit Segesta, an ancient Elymians colony dominated by an elegant solitary Doric temple. The surrounding hills, dedicated to crops and pasture, are probably the same as thousands of years ago. Visit both the temple and the theatre built in the III century B.C. In the afternoon, we will drive to Erice, an ancient town founded by the Elyms, castled on Mt S. Giuliano at 751 metres altitude. This fascinating ancient village has tiny, narrow streets, medieval arches, and Spanish-style courtyards that will seduce you. Thanks to its elevated position, you can enjoy a wonderful view: from one side, the bay of Trapani, the salt pans and the Aegadian islands and on the other side, the wide valley of Valderice, Custonaci and the hinterland countryside. We will visit Eryx's city centre, main cathedral, and Venere Castle. Tour accommodation is in Trapani, where we stay for two nights. **B/D**



Day 5, Saturday 20th September MARSALA & SALTPANS

Today, we'll visit the charming town of Marsala, where Garibaldi went ashore in May 1860. Marsala is a modern

Mediterranean city, divided between sea and land, featuring unforgettable colours: bright yellow, intense blue, strong red, dazzling white and natural green. There's a light lunch planned at a local wine cellar, and then the tour will continue taking the Salt Road route, where the salt marshes have given rise to one of the oldest salt-extracting industries in the world. Between Trapani and Marsala, the Salt Road is now protected for its interesting birdlife and is an important industrial archaeology site. **B/D**



Day 6, Sunday 21st September MAZZARA DEL VALLO – SELINUNTE

After breakfast, we'll check out of our hotel and head South East. Mazara del Vallo is home of the Dancing Satyr. This large bronze statue, which dates to the 3rd century BC, was discovered 500 metres underwater in the Strait of Sicily in 1998 and now resides in the Museo del Satiro in Sant'Egidio Church. Piazza della Repubblica is at the heart of the city with Baroque buildings such as the Bishop's Palace, cathedral and a statue of San Vito. The town was founded by the Phoenicians and, like many other towns in Sicily, has a history featuring Greek, Roman, Arab and Norman conquests. It was an important port in antiquity and is still a major fishing town, with its harbour home to Italy's largest fishing vessel fleet. Drive to Selinunte near Castelvetrano, one of Sicily's most important archaeological sites. This ancient Greek colony, founded in 650 BC, is divided into four zones: the acropolis with its public and religious buildings; the ancient city with the ruins of various homes; the eastern temples, which give some idea of the wealth and importance of this Greek settlement in the 6th century BC and the Sanctuary of

Malophoros dedicated to Demeter, the goddess of fertility and harvest. At the Acropoli, you will visit Temples A and C. The first temple to be spotted as the track climbs uphill, is the ruin of Temple A. Within the wall with the doorway into the naòs (a small chapel) are two spiral staircases, the most ancient examples known to date. Temple C, which was re-erected in 1925, is the earliest surviving temple at Selinus and was probably dedicated to Apollo or Heracles. Temple G is Sicily's second largest Greek temple, after the Temple of Olympian Zeus at Agrigento. Arrive at a hotel in Agrigento, where we'll stay for two nights. Dinner at the hotel. **B/D**



Day 7, Monday 22nd September VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES

This morning, the tour continues in Agrigento, visiting the famous Valley of the Temples – a UNESCO World



Heritage Site. It was defined by Pindar "the most beautiful city of mortals". As one of the most prosperous of the ancient Greek cities on the island, Agrigento presents a remarkable series of Doric Temples of the 5th century. We'll admire the remaining ancient Akragas among hundreds of almond trees. Walk alongside the "extraordinary "Temple of Hera", "Temple of Concordia", and "Temple of Heracles". For lunch today, a picnic with local products in a beautiful private garden near the Valley of the Temples, **B/L**



Day 8, Tuesday 23rd September PIAZZA ARMERINA – CALTAGIRONE

Today is another amazing day of history and culture. The group will visit the famous UNESCO World Heritage Site of Villa Romana del Casale in Piazza Armerina to view the splendid polychrome mosaics. This majestic villa, which belonged to a member of the Roman Senatorial aristocracy, hosts prestigious mosaics representing mythological and historical episodes and scenes of hunting and entertainment. In the afternoon, visit Caltagirone, the most famous place in Sicily for ceramic production, dating back to prehistoric times. Next, enjoy the view of the town's renowned landmark, the stairs of Santa Maria del Monte, each step paved with majolica tiles in different colours and shapes. There's also time to browse the many ceramic shops during the visit. Dinner and two overnight stays in Ragusa. **B/D**



Day 9, Wednesday 24th September MODICA – RAGUSA

After breakfast, we'll visit Modica with its Baroque architectural treasures; for this reason, it is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Walking along the tiny streets of this charming town, we'll stop to visit Sabadi, one of the most renowned chocolate manufacturers whose chocolate has been awarded accolades for the best Modica chocolate during the last decade. You will enjoy a multisensorial chocolate tasting, discovering authentic Sicilian perfumes... You'll savour some local delicacies under the shadow of the amazing Orti di San Giorgio. A breathtaking panorama will be the setting of

your relaxing lunch. In the afternoon, visit Ragusa Ibla and its historical centre, cradle of Sicilian Baroque. This little ancient town hosts over 50 churches and many Baroque architectural treasures. Be fascinated by its Cathedral, situated in the beautiful Dome square, and you will love the “Giardino Ibleo”, the oldest of the four main gardens in Ragusa... At 383 metres above sea level, you can admire a spectacular panorama from this beautiful garden. Dinner and overnight in Ragusa. **B/L/D**



Day 10, Thursday 25th September NOTO

After breakfast in the hotel, the group will depart for Noto, the capital of Sicilian Baroque, famous for its fine buildings of the early eighteenth century and declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Inspired by Baroque ideals of an “open city”, Noto is a rare masterpiece and the clearest example of theatrical tastes in 18th-century architecture whose local limestone has been burnt gold by the sun. Noto’s Baroque is a game of elegant curves, floral weaves, perspective views, palaces and gardens, capitals and ornaments that adorn the facades of churches and monasteries. Visit Palazzo Nicolaci Villadorata, a beautiful, noble residence in the Baroque style—free time for a walk along the town. Arrive in Syracuse for dinner and check in to your hotel where you’ll stay for two nights hotel. **B/L/D**



Day 11, Friday 26th September SYRACUSE

After breakfast, a visit to the most beautiful Greek colony in Sicily and yet another World Heritage Site. The visit will start with the Archaeological Park of Neapolis, with its Greek Theatre, the Roman Amphitheatre, the Latomie of Paradise and the Ear of Dionysius. We’ll next visit the splendid Ortigia, a small island that is the historical centre of Syracuse. In Ortigia. Admire the beautiful Cathedral, which dominates the square with its authoritative presence. The façade is a powerful Sicilian-Baroque composition, but it does not hint that this building was once a Doric temple! From Piazza Duomo, we’ll reach a wide terrace on the waterfront surrounding the famous Arethusa’s Fountain, one of the most famous fresh-water sources of the Greek world. Dinner in a local restaurant. **B/D**



Day 12, Saturday 27th September CATANIA

Late this morning, the group will arrive in Catania to visit Catania’s historical centre, the UNESCO World Heritage Site, with its original Baroque style and its unique streets built with black lava stone. The colour scheme of the city-centre buildings is black and dark grey, relieved with white limestone details around doors and windows. The effect is extremely elegant! The walking tour will start from the scenic Duomo square with its magnificent Cathedral and the famous “Liotru” statue, an antique lava-stone elephant, a symbol of the city. Not far from here, we will reach University Square, and we will have a walk along the splendid baroque Via dei Crociferi, the most representative 18th-century street in Catania, where we will admire the famous S. Benedict Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Transfer to Taormina for two nights. Dinner in a local restaurant. **B/D**



Day 13, Sunday 28th September ETNA

This morning, the tour will continue with an excursion to Mount Etna, the highest (c. 3,350m) volcano in Europe and one of the largest and most active in the world, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its regional park protects 59,000 hectares of unique geology, flora and fauna, villages and farms, and traditional methods of forestry, bee-keeping, wine manufacture, stonework and carpentry. Views of stunning landscapes will amaze you when heading to Rifugio Sapienza. You will reach the “Crateri Silvestri”, small volcanic cones now inactive, surrounded by ancient lava flows. The view beyond the mountain’s hundreds of subsidiary cones and craters can extend across Sicily, the Aeolian islands and Calabria. The spectacle is unique! You will have the chance to enjoy the local homemade honey and some typical products of the area. Lunch today is included along with some wine tasting on the Etna territory. Dinner (if you can fit it in) is at your leisure. **B/L**



Day 14, Monday 29th September TAORMINA

In the morning, after breakfast, we’ll visit Taormina, a charming town renowned for its magnificent position above the sea, commanding a celebrated view of Etna. You’ll see Taormina’s fascinating Greek theatre with its amazing views. Then, there’s free time for a walk among the picturesque medieval narrow streets to search for the local handicrafts and food. (Coral jewels, precious laces, ceramics, pastries and much more). You’ll also take a boat tour along the lovely Taormina coast. **B/D**



Day 15, Tuesday 30th September MILAZZO – LIPARI

Later this morning, we’ll transfer to Milazzo on the north of the island, where you will take the hydrofoil to Lipari, the biggest island of the Aeolian archipelago, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Dinner and overnight in the hotel, where we stay for six nights. **B/D**



Day 16, Wednesday 1st October LIPARI

After breakfast, we will discover the charming historic centre of Lipari. Visit the ancient Acropolis, the lovely Castle as well as the beautiful Cathedral with its Cloister and the fascinating Archaeological Museum, where we can learn about the human settlements and development of successive civilisations in the Aeolian archipelago, from prehistoric times to modern times. In the afternoon, transfer from Lipari harbour to the renowned winery Tenute di Castellaro, where we’ll visit the cellar, walk through the vineyards and enjoy a wine tasting while watching the sunset over the beautiful islands of Alicudi, Filicudi and Salina. Dinner and overnight in the hotel. **B/D**



Day 17, Thursday 2nd October LIPARI – SALINA

After breakfast, the day will involve a boat trip along the most beautiful coves of Lipari and Salina. The first stop to enjoy the landscape and a relaxing swim will be at the Cave della pomice (pumice quarries). We will pass the charming Acquacalda Bay before reaching Salina. The first stop will be in S. Marina di Salina, where we visit the most important municipality of the island and the splendid homonymous little church with its ancient pieces of faience. Enjoy shopping and buy local products such as capers and the delicious dessert wine “Malvasia”. Back again on the boat, we’ll stop for a second swim in the stunning bay of Pollara, featured in the awarded Italian movie “The Postman”. We then stop in Lingua, a lovely fishing village where we will have time to visit the salt lake that gave the island its name, or if you prefer, rest in one of the lovely coffee bars along the city centre’s main street. We suggest you stop at the famous Alfredo bar for a lunch break to taste its typical “pani cunzatu” and its delicious granita. On the way back, visit the most romantic coves of Lipari and enjoy a swim on Vinci Beach, facing the Faraglioni. Back to Lipari in the afternoon, dinner and overnight in the hotel. **B/D**



Day 18, Friday 3rd September PANAREA

Our fascinating Aeolian archipelago tour continues. Departure by boat from Marina Corta Lipari harbour to the charming and

picturesque Panarea. We’ll stop in the amazing Calajunco Bay to swim in its turquoise and crystalline waters. We will admire the prehistoric village of Capo Milazzese high up. We will continue the panoramic tour among the islets, visit the wonderful Cave of Lovers, and then stop at Panarea Harbour. Once on the island, you will have time to visit the Church of St Peter, enjoy a breathtaking panoramic view, and then reach the prehistoric village of Capo Milazzese. In the afternoon, depart for Stromboli. Along the way you will admire the small village of Ginostra and the gigantic rock Strombolicchio. Arrive on the island, and visit the charming village and house where Ingrid Bergman stayed during the filming of the movie “Stromboli, Land of God” and where she fell in love with Roberto Rossellini. We will have free time for dinner, shopping, walking in this nice Island’s magnificent gardens, or swimming in the beautiful cobalt-blue waters. Back to the boat at sunset and to admire the Sciarra del Fuoco, a steep slope crossed by lava streams of reddish lapilli. In the late evening, return to Lipari accommodation for overnight. **B**



Day 19, Saturday 4th October VULCANO

After breakfast, our tour of the fascinating Aeolian archipelago continues with a visit to Vulcano. The day will start by skirting Vulcanello along the bay, where the

lava has created fantastic figures in the striking Valley of Monsters! Leaving the Faraglioni and the Grotta degli Angeli on the right, you will admire the active volcano and the Black Sand Bay, renowned for its long volcanic sand beach. Then on to Grotta del Cavallo, near which is the Venus Pool with its crystal waters. We’ll sail along the island until Gelso, a small uninhabited village, and stop for a swim. Lastly, we’ll reach Levante Harbour, where the acrid sulphur smell will greet you. There, a tour around the village, a swim in the sludge pool, or the geothermic pools. For those who desire, there will be an opportunity to climb the crater. The climb is 1 km long and offers a breathtaking view of the islands and the crater itself, optional and on your own without a guide. Return to Lipari in the afternoon. **B/D**



Day 20, Sunday 5th October LIPARI – FILICUDI – ALICUDI

After breakfast, the day is at leisure in Lipari.

Alternatively, there is an option to

discover the two wild islands of the Aeolian Archipelago: Alicudi e Filicudi. We will start the crossing towards Filicudi till Grotta del Bue Marino, where you can enjoy an unforgettable swim. Afterwards, we will reach the Faraglioni: Montenassari, Giafante and especially Canna, a peculiar volcanic neck 1.800 m wide and 71 m high. Then, stop and visit the prehistoric village of Capo Graziano. Before leaving, we suggest you see “The Millstones of Filicudi”, located in front of the underwater archaeological area, where the craftsmen, facilitated by the layered structure of the rocks, modelled the enormous stones for the wheat and olive mills. In the early afternoon, a sail to Alicudi, the westernmost and least populated Aeolian archipelago. Almost perfectly circular, it is characterised by splendid views of the sea, dry terraces, and narrow granite coves, the only access routes to the beaches. Within the island, there are no asphalted roads, only paths that donkeys can explore, the island’s only means of transport. Return to Lipari in the afternoon. Dinner and overnight in the hotel. **B/D**



Day 21, Monday 6th October LIPARI – MILAZZO – CATANIA

After breakfast, transfer to the harbour to reach the hydrofoil for Milazzo. Transfer to Catania hotel for one night stay. A special farewell dinner is planned for us to recap and enjoy the memories of our wonderful adventure. **B/D**

Day 22, Tuesday 7th October Catania and departure

Today, you’ll fly home or to your next destination. (All flights TBA). **B**



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over ‘mostly flat’ terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.