

EXPLORE!

Self-Guided Walk Sicily and the Aeolian Islands

8 days

Italy - Trip code WSSI



Self-Guided Walk Sicily and the Aeolian Islands

Hike the lava strewn slopes of Sicily's brooding Mount Etna, Europe's largest volcano, 3323 metres above sea level. Hop by boat between the tiny Aeolian Islands and climb their volcanic cones which rise, sometimes smoking, out of an intensely turquoise sea. Daily life passes slowly here, following the rhythm of the seasons. Enjoy panoramic walks, wonderful beaches and the excellent fresh Sicilian food and wine.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Volcanoes** - Walk on active volcanoes including Vulcano, Stromboli and Mount Etna
- ★ **Lipari** - Enjoy bustling nightlife and see the ancient Roman remains
- ★ **Coastline** - Wonderful beaches and picturesque Mediterranean fishing villages
- ★ **Food and drink** - Great choice of traditional local food and wine

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Lipari

The accommodation for the first four nights of your holiday is in the main town of Lipari on the island of the same name. It's easy to catch public buses from here to access a variety of walking options on the island and boats depart frequently from Lipari harbour to neighbouring islands. Lipari has a reputation as the liveliest in the Aeolian Islands! You can visit the old fortress, stroll around the local fish market or sit and enjoy good food, wine and music in a bistro in the ancient harbour of Marina Vecchia. If you are arriving into Catania airport today you should aim to arrive no later than 12:30 hours to give yourself sufficient time to reach Milazzo harbour before the last hydrofoil to Lipari at 18:30 hours. More details of how to reach the start point of your holiday can be found on our website in the tour specific dates and prices section by clicking on 'Joining Info' and then the 'Show More' button.



Accommodation: Hotel Oriente (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - A choice of walks to explore Lipari Island

Over the next three days you'll have the chance to enjoy a variety of walks around the island of Lipari, which is the largest of the UNESCO World Heritage listed Aeolian Islands. It's your choice as to which ones you fancy and which day you'd like to do them. Today you might like to take a walk to the southern tip of the island and to Mount Guardia starting from the port. This varied walk will give you fantastic views of the coast and on a clear day you can see Vulcano Island. You'll walk firstly to an astronomical observatory overlooking Vulcano and also the rugged cliffs and the rocky sea stacks of Faraglioni. On the second section of the walk you'll descend to the old town centre of Lipari, with its beautiful historic architecture. Alternatively you may choose a shorter walk from one beach to another - Acquacalda to Canneto. To start the walk you'll need to take the local bus from Lipari to Acquacalda. The walk will take you through the evergreen vegetation of the Mediterranean scrub and on your way you'll see pumice caves and get to enjoy magnificent views on the surrounding islands. Some of the best views can be found at the panoramic point at 346 metres above sea level. The walk descends to Canneto, the most famous beach on Lipari Island, where you can enjoy a refreshing swim before taking the local bus back to Lipari town. The Mount Guardia walk is almost 11.5 kilometres and expected to take around five hours with an ascent and descent of 560 metres. The Acquacalda to Canneto walk is five-and-a-half kilometres and will take you around one-and-a-half to two hours with an ascent and descent of 380 metres.



Accommodation: Hotel Oriente (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Further walks to discover Lipari Island

Today you may like to take a walk from Quattropani along the western coast of the island, which is the wildest part of Lipari and gives you the sense of plunging into a true wilderness. To start the walk you'll need to take the local bus from Lipari to Quattropani. After enjoying some magnificent land and sea views along the way you'll reach the San Calogero Thermal Baths, dating back to the Mycenaean period and thought to be the oldest spa in the Mediterranean. You can then walk back to Lipari town through pretty villages and past steaming volcanic fumaroles. An alternative option is to take a boat over to the island of Vulcano to take a walk to the Gran Cratere. Vulcano is a small, but spectacular island and the most southerly in the Aeolian chain. You can walk up through an almost lunar landscape to the Gran Cratere 'the great crater', which constantly emits a yellowish smoke, which colours the surrounding ground due to its sulphurous steam. From the top you have an exceptional 360 degree view of the island and the volcanic archipelago beyond. The descent along green slopes gives you an amazing contrast of colours against the blue sea and the dark grey rocks. The Lipari to Quattropani walk is 13.5 kilometres and will take you around four-and-a-half to five hours with an ascent of 500 metres and descent of 800 metres. The hike up Gran Cratere on Vulcano island is just under six-and-a-half kilometres and will take you around two-and-a-half hours with an ascent and descent of 370 metres.



Accommodation: Hotel Oriente (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Final day walking from Lipari

Today you may like to take a short hydrofoil ride from Lipari to Salina Island. Salina is unlike the other nearby islands as it has a lush landscape of wildflowers, woodland and hillsides covered by vineyards. Once on the island you can take a local bus to Semaforo di Pollara where you can see an abandoned lighthouse high on the clifftop. From here you can walk along the western coast. It is a demanding climb with some steep ascents and descents, but your efforts will be rewarded with amazing views of the Filicudi and Alicudi Islands. The walk ends in the village of Rinella from where you can take a bus back to the main port of Salina. The walk on Salina is seven-and-a-half kilometres and expected to take you two-and-a-half to three hours with an ascent of 405 metres and descent of 655 metres.



Accommodation: Hotel Oriente (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Exciting trip to the remarkable island of Stromboli

Today you'll take the boat to Stromboli Island. On arrival at the port in Stromboli your main luggage will be taken and transferred to your hotel leaving you free to stroll through the narrow whitewashed streets. The walking on Stromboli is a one of a kind and a spectacular experience as the volcano here is constantly erupting. There are two options for the walk on Stromboli depending on your walking ability. You may choose to take a circular walk to 272 metres above sea level to see the lava flow field called the 'Sciara di Fuoco'. This walk is suitable for all abilities and it's rare for the route to be inaccessible due to volcanic conditions. Alternatively, you may decide to take a more strenuous walk, which involves climbing to the top of Mount Stromboli at 924 metres above sea level. It is only possible to do this climb if you are accompanied by an authorised volcanologist as part of a guided group walk. This walk starts in the late afternoon, so that you reach the top in time for sunset. You'll stop here for a while as the darkness offers the best chance to observe the light show caused by the lava erupting volcano. The descent is at night, so you will need to bring a torch, as there are no public street lights on the island. The top section of the climb and descent of the mountain is on volcanic ash so it's important to have good walking boots and you may find walking poles helpful too. Please note that this walk may be restricted or

cancelled at short notice due to volcanic activity or bad weather. As the top of Mount Stromboli is restricted to 80 visitors per day and demand can be high, Explore's partner in Italy, S-Cape Travel, will have provisionally booked you a space on this group walk and for which there is a cost of €30.00 per person payable locally. You will need to confirm with the company offering this walk beforehand if you wish to take part and details of how to do this will be in the trip route notes, provided a few weeks before you travel. The Stromboli to Sciara del Fuoco walk is just under eight-and-half kilometres and will take you around two-and-a-half hours with an ascent and descent of 325 metres. The Stromboli summit walk is 14 kilometres and takes around six hours with an ascent and descent of 1000 metres.



Accommodation: Hotel Villaggio Stromboli (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Hydrofoil or ferry to Milazzo and train or bus to Catania

Today you need to make your way from Stromboli to Milazzo Port by hydrofoil or ferry boat and then take a local train or bus to Catania. Full details are provided in the trip destination manual which you receive a few weeks before travel. You then have the whole afternoon free to explore this beautiful and lively city. You may like to visit the cathedral or the ancient Benedictine monastery, which is a jewel of Sicilian Baroque architecture. If the weather is hot, we recommend trying 'granita', a local specialty made up of shaved ice and fruity syrup accompanied by a delicious brioche pastry.



Accommodation: Hotel La Collegiata (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Guided hiking group tour of Mount Etna

This morning after breakfast a taxi transfer takes you to Piano Provenzana, where you'll discover majestic Mount Etna on a guided walking trip. The walk will take you up the slopes of the volcano, walking amongst recent lava flows, caves and lush vegetation. You'll enjoy a picnic of local produce along the way. You are brought back to your hotel at the end of the day where you can enjoy a final evening in Catania. Today's walk is 10 kilometres and expected to take around four-and-a-half to five hours with an ascent and descent of 450 metres. The group will have a maximum of 8 walkers of potentially mixed nationalities and will be guided in English and maybe one other language, depending on the make-up of the group.



Accommodation: Hotel La Collegiata (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Catania

After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCE



Walking grade

Moderate

Trek details

On this holiday the total distance walked will depend on which daily options you chose to take, with walks ranging from 5.5 to 14 kilometres. Much of the terrain in these volcanic landscapes will be rocky with some loose scree. The most difficult walk, the Stromboli summit ascent (from sea level to 924m) is an optional guided group walk. The included day spent walking on Mount Etna is also part of a guided small group. There are no technically difficult sections nor scrambling required.

Max walking altitude (m)

924



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bus
Ferry



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

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Climate

April/May and October/November are pleasantly warm. June/September are the hottest months. Showers are common in Autumn.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Italian

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Excursion to the top of Mount Stromboli - €30.00+ €3.00 tax per person.

Clothing

You will need light layers of clothing for walking during the day and a fleece and waterproof jacket as temperatures can drop on the mountains. A sunhat is essential and bring a swimming costume if you wish to bathe in the sea.

Footwear

We recommend you bring walking boots - leather or fabric are both fine. Some of the paths are a bit rocky underfoot and so you could twist an ankle if not wearing boots. Trainers are not recommended. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. We recommend that you wear/carry your walking boots as hand luggage on the international flight; should your luggage be delayed, your well broken-in boots will be irreplaceable. Bring trainers and sandals for relaxing and other

sightseeing.

Luggage: On tour

You will need one main piece of baggage and a daypack sufficiently large enough to take everything needed for your walking day, such as your water bottle, snacks, spare clothing and camera. A luggage transfer is included between the port of Stromboli and the Stromboli hotel on your arrival and departure on the island. This transfer is provided by the hotel that will have a 4-wheeled 'Ape' tuk-tuk with the hotel name waiting for you at the port. On all other occasions you will take your own luggage with you.

Luggage transfer

Included between the port of Stromboli and the Stromboli hotel on your arrival and departure on the island. This transfer is provided by the hotel that will have a 4-wheeled 'Ape' tuk-tuk with the hotel name waiting for you at the port. On all other occasions you will take your own luggage with you.

Equipment

You should bring a two litre water bottle, sunhat, sunglasses and sunscreen. Trekking poles are recommended. Maps - Along with the destination manual and route notes you will be sent a set of maps that have been created specifically for this trip to help you navigate. The route is marked on each map together with a series of numbered waypoints which correspond with instructions in the route notes. Should you wish to purchase a more detailed commercially produced map we recommend the following:- General maps Sicilia 1:200.000 TCI Touring Club Italiano, ISBN: 8836548279

Tipping

Local fees

A local city tax is required to be paid in cash upon check-in to each accommodation - approximately 3 Euros per person per night. Transport between Catania and Milazzo (train) - approximately 15 Euros one way Hydrofoil between Milazzo and Lipari - approximately 16 Euros one way Boat between Lipari and Salina Island - approximately 16 Euros one way Boat between Lipari and Stromboli Island - allow 26 Euros one way

Country Information

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Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£10.00 - 14.00

Beer price

£2.00 - 4.00

Water price

£1.00 - 2.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

GBP.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

Major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Larger hotels and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

Only in major towns. Please note, the exchange rate for cash and Travellers Cheques is poor.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Ferry

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Visas are not required by UK citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer click [here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Maximum altitude (m)

924

Included activities

Due to the volcanic dust and sulphur fumes from the volcanic mountains, we ask asthma sufferers or customers with heart conditions of any kind to take these factors into consideration when deciding if this holiday is right for you.

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Vaccinations

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
