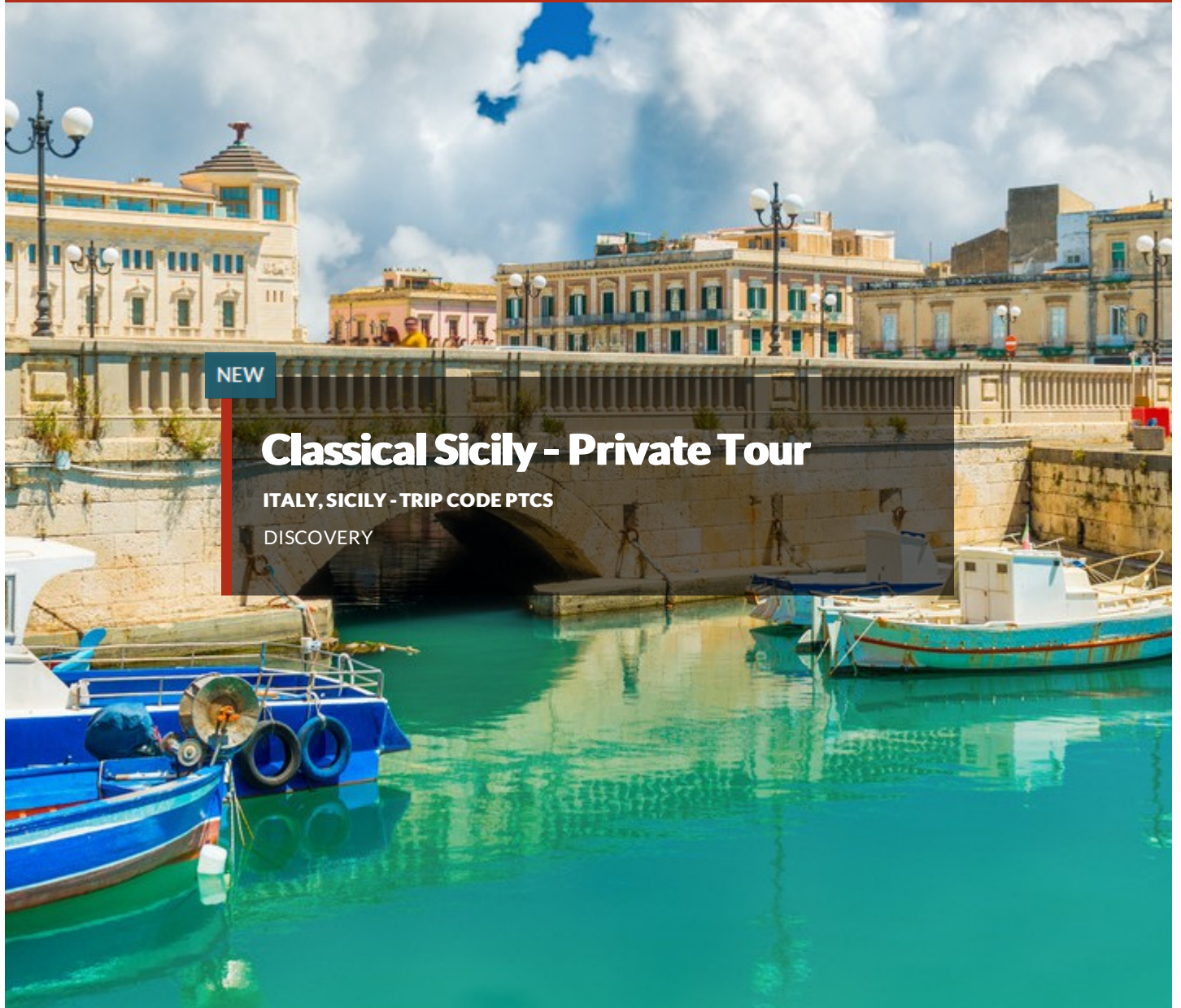


# EXPLORE!

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NEW

## Classical Sicily - Private Tour

ITALY, SICILY - TRIP CODE PTCS

DISCOVERY

### Why book this trip?

With private transfers and guides at key sites, this one-week trip takes in the very best of the Mediterranean's largest island, Sicily. Visit a wealth of ancient historical sights, from Ancient Greek columns to beautiful Baroque towns. Take the chance to go up Europe's tallest active volcano, Mount Etna, and eat delicious arancini or seafood washed down by Italian wines.

- **Agrigento** - Visit Sicily's most famous Classical remains in the Valley of the Temples with its remarkable Doric architecture
- **Villa Romana del Casale** - See some of the best preserved and most extensive mosaics left in Europe at this Roman villa
- **Why Not Extend Your Trip?** - Combine this trip with our private 'Malta and Gozo Discovery' tour (trip

02/09/2021 12:48:02

code: PTMLA) to make a two week holiday to these varied Mediterranean islands



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 7



**TRIP STAFF**  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
Car



**ACCOMMODATION**  
7 nights  
comfortable hotel



**TRIP PACE:**  
Moderate

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Trip begins in Palermo

Arrive in Palermo, Sicily's capital with a rich mix of Greek, Roman, Islamic and Byzantine culture all merging into a fascinating mix of architecture and customs.

You will be met on arrival at Palermo's Falcone-Borsellino International airport (airport code PMO), by an airport representative and a driver who will take you to your hotel, a 45 minute drive away. There are no activities planned today, so feel free to arrive in Palermo Airport at any time. For those booking their own flights, you will just need to let us know your flight details no later than three weeks prior to departure, in order to be met on arrival.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to visit the Gothic Cathedral which was founded in 1185 by the Englishman, Walter of the Mill, and its extensive mosaics and beautiful cloisters.

Tonight will be your first opportunity to sample Sicilian cuisine and wine. According to Greek legend the god Dionysus brought wine to Sicily, whereas it's more likely that wine has been produced here since ancient times due to the island being blessed with plenty of sunshine and reliably moderate rainfall, along with fertile volcanic soils. Nowadays there is a huge variety of both delicious red and white wines to choose from.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Ibis Styles Palermo Cristal (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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## **DAY 2 - Visit to the Palatine Chapel and Monreale Cathedral; free time in Palermo**

This morning you will get to experience some of Sicily's Norman history with a local guide. First on the agenda is a visit to the Palatine Chapel, which was the royal chapel of Sicily's Norman kings and is packed with spectacular Byzantine mosaics.

Driving into the hills just a short distance out of the capital, visit the majestic Norman Cathedral of Monreale with your guide. Founded in 1174 by William the Good, the cathedral is also famous for its extensive mosaics, as well as its beautiful cloisters showing both Romanesque and Islamic influences.

Returning to Sicily's capital, the afternoon is free to enjoy Palermo. The city stands at the foot of Monte Pellegrino, with the fertile valley of Concha d'Oro behind. It was one of the richest cities in Europe from the 9th to the 12th centuries AD when Islamic culture, Byzantine magnificence and medieval Europe were merging into a fascinating civilisation. Today, the city maintains a sense of cultural diversity and is famous for its art, music and food.

You might like to visit Palermo's cathedral with its ornate facade, the grand Teatro Massimo opera house, the natural beauty of the Botanical Gardens or the extensive catacombs under the city, to name just a few of the attractions on offer.

If you fancy a snack whilst exploring then you could try panelle, which is a popular street food. It's a fritter made from chickpeas eaten in a roll like a hot sandwich. If you fancy something sweet then cassata is Sicily's most famous cake, which is normally covered in marzipan and green icing over a moist fruity sponge layered with ricotta.



ACCOMMODATION:

Ibis Styles Palermo Cristal (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



### **DAY 3 - See the mosaics at Villa Romana del Casale and continue to Agrigento**

Leaving Palermo with a driver this morning, drive for a couple of hours inland to Piazza Amerina, a charming market town set amid rolling countryside. This isn't a town on the tourist trail and there may be some time to stroll along through the peaceful streets and picturesque squares, where the local men gather to discuss the events of the day and to put the world to rights, just as they have done for generations. Just a short hop from the town is the Villa Romana del Casale, which is easily visited without a guide. These ruins of a once-magnificent country mansion contain some incredibly well-preserved and beautiful Roman mosaics, such as the famed bikini girls, fishing cupids and hunting scenes featuring exotic wildlife like tigers, rhinos and elephants. The mosaics are UNESCO-Listed and spread over a remarkable 3,500 square metres.

From here, drive on a further 1.5 hours to Agrigento, which was once one of the most prosperous cities in Sicily. This provides the base for an exploration of one of Sicily's most important classical sites, and certainly one of the most outstanding examples of Greek ancient architecture that exists outside of Greece - the Valley of the Temples.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Hotel Akrabello (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST**

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### **DAY 4 - Explore the Valley of the Temples with a guide; free afternoon in Agrigento**

A local guide will pick you up this morning for your drive out to the Valley of the Temples, this misleadingly-named site that stands overlooking a ridge just outside the town of Agrigento. Walk around the ruins of the largest Doric temple ever constructed - the Temple of Zeus. Standing next to this monumental structure you are only as tall as the first few entry steps and so you tend to feel very small staring up at the gigantic pillars above you. Explore the perfectly-proportioned Doric columns of the Temple of Concord, as well as the oldest temple in the complex, honouring Hercules. This impressive site is well worth the visit with an expert guide, who will add to your knowledge of Sicily's complex and fascinating history.

In the afternoon, return to Agrigento and relax. If you have energy for exploring, you may wish to climb some of the steep, winding stairways of the city to the Duomo, or to the church of Santa Maria dei Greci. This church was built on a Greek temple, and you are still able to see some of the foundations of the original temple below - a reminder of just how much has been built in Sicily, covering many ancient Greek

sites.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Akrabello (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 5 - Drive to Syracuse via the Baroque gems of Ragusa and Modica**

Depart Agrigento and drive west towards Syracuse, making a couple of scenic stops en route. Those familiar with the Italian TV series Inspector Montalbano will recognise some of the locations today as the aim is to stop at the Sicilian Baroque pearls of Modica and Ragusa. Modica, nestled at the foot of a deep gorge, is famous for its Aztec-inspired chocolate introduced during the Spanish rule of the island, and you may wish to make a visit to one of the towns many traditional chocolatiers during your unguided stop. The magnificent town of Ragusa is set atop a hill, and you'll also have some time here to explore the narrow alleyways, Baroque palaces and charming piazzas on foot. As with every other place in the region, the old town collapsed in the 1693 earthquake and a new town, Ragusa Superiore, was built on top of the hill. The oldest part of town, Ragusa Ibla, was rebuilt by the old aristocracy and the two towns were later joined to become the provincial capital.

In the afternoon, arrive in Syracuse. During the Greek Classical period, this east coast city was the largest in the ancient world - even bigger than Athens. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is also notable as being the birthplace of antiquity's greatest mathematician, Archimedes. This evening, we recommend strolling 20-30 minutes to nearby Ortygia Island, which is a great place to sit and watch the world go by. This small island is the historical centre of the city and home to many landmarks such as the Fonte of Aretusa, Temple of Apollo ruins, Maniace Castle, and the narrow streets of the Jewish Quarter. Its limestone buildings and pretty harbour front make it an ideal place to sip coffee and enjoy a cake. Perhaps try cannolo, a traditional Sicilian dessert, a crisp shell filled with sweet ricotta and chocolate chips topped with candied fruits. If you prefer a savoury snack, then try arancini. These rice balls are stuffed with a range of fillings such as beef ragu and gooey cheese - delicious!



ACCOMMODATION:

Aretusa Palace Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 6 - Discover Syracuse's historic Neapolis; drive to Giardini Naxos**

Explore Syracuse this morning with a local guide. The most important site is the Neapolis Archaeological Park with its famous Greek theatre hewn out of the hillside and the fine Roman amphitheatre where gladiators once fought.

In the afternoon, drive to the small coastal town of Giardini Naxos. This sweet little fishing town sits in the shadow of Mount Etna and is the spot of the oldest Greek settlement in Sicily back in 735 BC. It's a great spot for relaxing beside the sea and tucking into fresh fish and some of the tastiest gelato in Italy.

The hotel that we plan to use is in Giardini Naxos, but as this area along with Taormina are Sicily's most popular locations, rooms at this hotel may not always be available. If this is the case we will offer an alternative that will either be located in Giardini Naxos or Taormina. Each town is easily visited from the other on the hop-on public bus.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel la Riva (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 7 - Free day in Giardini Naxos; chance to travel to Mount Etna**

Today is completely at your leisure to relax and enjoy. If you'd like to take an excursion to Mount Etna, speak to your driver prior to arrival in Giardini Naxos on Day 6 and he will be able to help organise it along with our local supplier. The trip takes place with a combination of vehicle, cable car and a final 1,000m stretch of walking, which takes you up to 3,000 - currently the furthest possible for visitors.

Alternatively, you might prefer to enjoy the coastal location of Giardini Naxos. There is an archaeological zone that doesn't feature a huge number of ruins but it does offer a very pleasant walk through the citrus groves. There is also a small museum here with some interesting findings from different historical periods. Taormina is also a popular day trip, with its ancient Greek Amphitheatre being high on the list of

must-sees. The snow-capped Mount Etna acts as a spectacular backdrop to the remarkably preserved columned stage and it's easy to see why this is possibly the most famous view in all of Sicily and it makes for a superb photograph. You might also choose to visit the Villa Comunale Gardens which offer a peaceful escape from Taormina's bustling main street. Here you can walk amidst magnolia, hibiscus and bougainvillea trees.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel la Riva (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 8 - Trip ends in Giardini Naxos

Your trip ends today, and you will be taken to the airport to meet your international flight. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Catania Fontanarossa Airport (CTA) at any time - it's approximately one hour from the hotel. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### Climate and country information

#### Italy

##### Climate

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

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+1	2 Pin Round	Roman Catholic	Italian

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## Sicily

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### Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

While this trip includes a great selection of Sicily's highlights, we have also built in free time to allow you the flexibility to choose from some of the excursions, museums and sights that this area has in abundance, or take time to relax, the choice is yours. An idea of optional activities are listed below to help you budget for your holiday. You will not have time to do all of them, but the list will give you an idea of what is possible.

Ortygia Island, Syracuse:

Entrance to Castello Maniace, €4.00 per person.

Guided tour of the Jewish Baths, €5.00 per person.

Boat trip along the coast, €10.00 per person. May not be possible in spring/autumn due to wind conditions.

Palermo:

Entrance to the Botanical Gardens, €5.00 per person.

Entrance to the catacombs, €3.00 per person.

Entrance to the cathedral, free of charge or €1.50 per person to see the Norman tombs.

Tour of the Teatro Massimo, €8.00 per person.

Giardini Naxos:

There are three different options for the Mount Etna tour:

1. Bus to 1,900 metres €32.00 per person

2. Bus to 1,900 metres plus cable car to 2,500 metres €64.00 per person

3. Bus to 1,900 metres, cable car to 2,500 metres plus four-wheel drive coach up to 2,900 metres €96.00 per person

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

It's possible to hire cold weather equipment at the top of the cable car: Quilted jackets €3.00 per person and walking boots €3.00 per person.

In windy conditions the cable car might not be running, in which case the four-wheel drive coach normally operates from 1,900 metres up to 2,500 metres.



Entrance to Giardini Naxos Archaeological Zone on day 7, €2.00 per person including museum entrance.

All excursions listed above are subject to change and availability and they may not all be possible throughout the year.

## **Clothing**

Throughout most of the year it's best to dress for hot conditions, although light rainwear and a warm fleece/jacket for nights when temperatures can drop is recommended. If you're travelling through late autumn and winter then the weather can be cooler and rain more frequent, so it's best to pack layers and rainwear just in case.

Anyone intending to visit Mount Etna should bring warm clothing as snow is a common occurrence (even in early summer). Wind and waterproof garments are therefore suggested for those wishing to visit the volcano.

Women should avoid bare arms and shoulders in churches, so it's best to carry a scarf or shawl.

## **Footwear**

It's best to pack comfortable walking shoes for exploring and sandals for relaxing and going to the beach to swim.

You will want warmer shoes and socks if you're going to go up Mount Etna.

## **Luggage**

20kg

### **Luggage: On tour**

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

## **Equipment**

Sicily is located off the southern coast of Italy and the weather is often sunny, so a sunhat and sunscreen are essential. You should also bring a two litre water bottle and insect repellent. You may also wish to bring a swimming costume and towel in order to make the most of swimming opportunities off the coastline. At any time of year it can be snowy on top of Mount Etna and considerably colder, so if you plan to travel up the volcano we'd recommend bringing gloves and a woolly hat.

## **Tipping**

### **Local crew**

Tipping in Italy is not always customary, particularly in restaurants, but of course is welcomed. When eating out many Italians simply round up the bill if paying in cash, or will leave some coins on the table for the waiter if paying by card. For local guides and drivers, we recommend around 3-5 Euros per person depending on the length of the tour or the drive. Of course, this is discretionary and should be based on

the service that you receive.

## Italy

### 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.

<b>Lunch price</b>	<b>Dinner price</b>	<b>Beer price</b>	<b>Water price</b>
£10.00 - 15.00	£20.00 - 25.00	£2.00 - 4.00	£1.00 - 2.00

### Foreign Exchange

<b>Local currency</b>	<b>Recommended Currency For Exchange</b>
Euro.	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.

<b>ATM Availability</b>	<b>Credit Card Acceptance</b>
Major towns.	Larger hotels and restaurants.

#### Travellers Cheques

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

## Sicily

### 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.

### Foreign Exchange

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## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

## Transport Information

## **Essential Information**

### **Government Travel Safety 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 citizens, check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice.

Please refer to our COVID-19 entry requirements page for any country-specific conditions of entry. Whilst we strive to update this on a regular basis we recommend you also check the FCDO website for the latest advice on entry requirements in this fast-evolving situation. Information can change at any time.

### **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.

### **Price Guarantee**

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 and Passport Information**

Visas are not required by UK, E.U Nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

### **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 receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

## Ability to swim

No

## Italy

### Vaccinations

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

## Sicily

### Additional Information



## Tour Staff

Unlike our group tours our private journeys do not have a Tour Leader. However, you are still in safe hands as we work closely with our expert local suppliers on the planning and

organisation of your holiday to ensure that you have a fantastic time. You'll be met on arrival in Palermo by an english-speaking representative, who will answer any questions you may have. The guides in Palermo, Agrigento and Syracuse are excellent, and will help to bring the destination to life. At times you may travel unaccompanied, or with just a driver (rather than a guide), but you will have all the information that you need to explore and there is always the reassurance that you have someone on hand with our 24/7 emergency contact number.

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## Reviews

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PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE



AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS