

EXPLORE!

Cycle Western Sicily
8 days

Italy, Sicily - Trip code CSI



Cycle Western Sicily

On this cycle trip we explore the western corner of this beautiful island and discover a melange of cultures, stunning beaches, the ancient Greek temple of Segesta and the capital Palermo. We base our rides from Marsala, Bruca and Trapani with a day trip for tranquil cycling on Favignana island. Experience the relaxed and friendly island lifestyle and sample delicious Sicilian culinary specialties accompanied by great local wines.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Cycle Sicily** - peaceful coastal roads, charming villages and wonderful land and seascapes
- ★ **Palermo** - Sicily's main city and a cultural melting pot
- ★ **Favignana Island** - Peaceful island cycling with wonderful beaches, inviting waters and no traffic
- ★ **Marsala** - Wine tasting and visit the Salt Mining Reserve and windmills
- ★ **Gastronomic Sicily** - Delicious culinary specialties, accompanied by superb local wines

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.

CYCLING GRADE:

Easy

Suitable for anyone who enjoys easy and relatively short rides on flat or gently undulating terrain. Ideal if you simply want to explore a region by bike at a relaxed pace.

GROUP SIZE:**10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Trip starts in Palermo

Our trip starts today in Palermo, a city rich in contrasts with imposing baroque churches, run-down noble palaces and loud and lively narrow streets lined with hanging washing. The hotel is located close to the Teatro Massimo, the 3rd largest historical Opera house in Europe and the largest in Italy, and it is just steps away from the bustling street market and elegant shopping streets. The rest of the day is free to explore this fascinating city.

No cycling today.



Accommodation: Hotel Tonic Palermo (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Palermo city tour and drive to Marsala

We start the day with a guided 2 hour walk around Palermo to see the Duomo, through the narrow streets of the Vucciria market, the noble quarters lined with gilded churches and decadent baroque palaces that help us understand the complex history of the capital of Sicily. After lunch we have some freetime to further explore this atmospheric city before we drive for about 2 hours to Marsala in the late afternoon. Shortly after checking into our hotel we will commence our bike allocation and fitting session so everything is ready for the first ride tomorrow.

No cycling today.



Accommodation: Hotel Viacolvento (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Cycle to the salt pans. Marsala wine tasting

Today's flat ride takes us to the characteristic Infersa salt flats, a patchwork of shallow coastal lakes and salt pans lined with ancient windmills and home to many migratory birds and a small salt museum (optional). There is the option to catch a small ferry the short distance to Mozia Island, once home to an important Phoenician settlement. The museum on Mozia tells the story of this colony and helps build a picture of how many cultures have influenced modern day Sicily. For those not visiting Mozia it is possible to cycle a self-guided 10km loop ride. Once everybody is back together we return by bike, using the same route to our hotel in Marsala and once back in town we visit a famous winery and taste some of the excellent locally made sweet Marsala wines.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 25 kilometres (Total 20 metres ascent and 20 metres descent) plus a further 10km optional ride.



Accommodation: Hotel Viacolvento (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Ride inland to Buseto Palizzolo

Leaving the bustling seaside towns behind we head inland, gradually ascending via a succession of pastures and fields of wheat. For the first part of the ride when leaving Marsala there will inevitably be more traffic and there are some up hill sections. Once away from the coast this sparsely populated, vast expanse of beautiful nature dotted with crumbling, old farm houses is a joy to the eye and a pallet of contrasting colours that change with every season. Spring is ripe with the lush green wheat that turns bronze yellow in summer then ochre and brown as the fields are ploughed. Our destination for the next two nights is a small family-run organic farm or agriturismo, located just outside Bruca, serving wonderful home grown and locally sourced Sicilian specialties prepared by 'mamma'.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 52 kilometres (Total 620 metres ascent and 300 metres descent).



Accommodation: Agriturismo Arcudaci (or similar)



Standard Agriturismo



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 5 - Ride to Segesta Greek Temple

We start the day with a short and easy ride through the rolling hills to the imposing archaeological site of Segesta - an ancient 'Elimian' town. You may start to wonder if you are hallucinating as you see perched on top of a hill overlooking a deep canyon, an unusually well-preserved (though unfinished) Doric temple built sometime in the late 5th century BC. A pleasant walk up the hill

past a series of buildings dating back to various periods takes us to the ancient Greek theatre carved into a natural rock hollow. In the afternoon we plan to continue by bike to some public hot springs. Alternatively you may choose to return directly to the accommodation and relax by the pool in which case you will have cycled a total of 16 km (total 180 metres ascent/descent). After relaxing our muscles in the warm waters, we return to the hotel by the same route we came.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 34 kilometres (Total 330 metres ascent/descent).



Accommodation: Agriturismo Arcudaci (or similar)



Standard Agriturismo



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 6 - Cycle down to Trapani. Optional cable car to Erice

Heading back towards the coast today we wind our way through the hills and then speed down to the lively city of Trapani where we spend the next two nights. Along the way the ancient town of Erice looms high above us and is said to have been founded by exiled Trojans. This was also an important religious site and a famous temple dedicated to Aphrodite (Venus in Roman times) allegedly stood here. After free time for lunch in Trapani, spend the afternoon mingling with the locals enjoying a stroll and people watching along the pedestrianised historic centre. Later this afternoon there is the option to take the cable car from Trapani up to Erice where a group dinner (not included in cost) can be enjoyed before returning to Trapani by taxi.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 33 kilometres (Total 230 metres ascent and 560 metres descent).



Accommodation: Hotel Tiziano (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Visit car-free Favignana Island

This morning we take the local ferry (40 mins) to Favignana island; the largest of the three Aegadian Islands, set just off the western coast of Sicily and well known for its tuna fishing tradition. Cycling its flat coastal roads we will contour the turquoise coloured coves and bays that tempt you to go for a dip before relaxing in the village square, drinking a coffee and watching the locals come and go. The ride is split into two loops, and the second loop of 11km involves going through a tunnel. Any riders that prefer not to cycle through the tunnel twice can relax on the beach instead. There are no cars on the island which makes for peaceful cycling.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 23 kilometres (Total 60 metres ascent and 60 metres descent).



Accommodation: Hotel Tiziano (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends Palermo Airport

Today we drive (1 hour) to Palermo Airport where the trip ends.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information

DAILY DISTANCE



General cycling information

On this trip we cycle 167 km over five days (an average of 33 km per day) with further optional rides available. Two of the cycling days are circular routes and therefore optional. We travel mainly on quiet country roads, mostly on the flat with hillier terrain on days 4 and 5. The Explore Leader will lead the rides and luggage is transported between hotels. Maps and route notes are also provided to cycle individually or in groups. GPX files are available upon request. We have graded the route as easy.

Bike included

21 gear Atala Discovery hybrid bikes

Bike information

Your included bike is a 21 gear Atala Discovery hybrid and will be the correct frame size for your height. Female and male frames are allocated accordingly when booking unless you specifically request otherwise. A pannier and water bottle holder (male frame only) are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. The Explore Leader leads the rides and luggage is transported between hotels. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Cycling grade

Easy



Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Lunch: 1
Dinner: 2



Transport

Bus
Bicycle
Ferry



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Cycle guide
Driver(s)



Accommodation

2 nights standard agriturismo
5 nights standard hotel

Trip information

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

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Italian

Sicily

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.

Marsala - Salt Museum 5 Euros
Return boat to Mozia Island - 5 Euros
Mozia Museum - 9 Euros
Trapani - Cable car to Erice and return by taxi 20 Euros

Clothing

When cycling: quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts, lightweight wind and water proof jacket and warmer breathable layers where local conditions require.

General: Pack layers of clothes essentially for mild or hot weather depending on the time of the year, but remember a warm fleece if travelling at the start or end of the season as the weather can be changeable.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to trips that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage. GPX files are available upon request so you can follow the route on your own GPS device, please arrange this before departure.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Country Information

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.

Lunch price

£5.00 - 10.00

Dinner price

£15.00 - 20.00

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.

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

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle, Ferry

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to

the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Standard - Our 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.

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.

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

Italy: 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.

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.

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 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, 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.

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
