



Sicilian Trails

ITALY, SICILY - TRIP CODE SIT

WALKING AND TREKKING

Why book this trip?

Enjoy a week of walking among the diverse landscapes of eastern Sicily, based in a welcoming family-run hotel close to the beach in Giardini Naxos. Hikes include the lava and pumice strewn landscapes of iconic Mount Etna, Europe's highest volcano and the Nebrodi Mountains National Park, one of Sicily's wildest scenic places.

- **Aeolian Islands** - Catch a ferry to the island of Vulcano and climb to the crater rim
- **Taormina and Syracuse** - Time to explore the streets and ancient sites of these picturesque towns
- **Pantalica Gorge** - Easy walking in a limestone gorge by an ancient UNESCO-listed necropolis

**INCLUDED MEALS**

Breakfast: 7
Lunch: 1
Dinner: 2

TRIP STAFF

Explore Tour
Leader / Trek
Guide
Boat Crew
Driver(s)

TRANSPORT

Bus
Boat
Ferry

ACCOMMODATION

7 nights
comfortable hotel

WALKING

GRADE:
Easy To
Moderate

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join trip at the seaside town of Giardini Naxos

The trip starts today at our base for the week, the seaside town of Giardini Naxos. Once a quiet fishing village, Giardini Naxos is now a popular resort, known for its beaches, panoramic view of the bay and surrounding hills with Mount Etna in the distance, and a small fishing port. Its position is ideal for accessing the endless hiking opportunities and incredibly varied scenery of eastern Sicily. The beautiful hill top town of Taormina, famous for its remarkable ancient theatre, is situated in the hills above Giardini Naxos and can be easily accessed by public bus.

Your trip Leader plans to meet everyone in the hotel reception at 6pm for the welcome meeting followed by the chance to go out for dinner for those that wish. There are no other activities planned today. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Catania Fontanarossa Airport (CTA), which is around an hour's drive from the hotel.

We stay at Hotel Villa Linda, a small and friendly family-run hotel situated in the peaceful Recanati area of Giardini Naxos, just a couple of minutes' walk from Recanati Beach, there are a number of restaurants, bars and a small supermarket close by. The well-appointed en suite bedrooms are air-conditioned and include a flat-screen satellite TV, hairdryer and safe. Free Wi-Fi is available.

**ACCOMMODATION:**

Hotel Villa Linda (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: DINNER

DAY 2 - Walking on the slopes of Mount Etna

Our walk today is on the northern slopes of Mount Etna, the highest volcano in Europe (3330m) and one of the largest in the world. Mount Etna is one of the most active volcanoes in the world and is in an almost constant state of activity. We drive up to 1900m on Etna's slopes. Hundreds of subsidiary cones and spent craters have been formed by lateral eruptions along regular lines of fracture which, together with twisted lumps of lava strewn chaotically around, provide an otherworldly setting. Setting out from a height of 1700m, we walk to the fissures of the 2002 eruptions and site of the former ski resort area of Piano Provenzana. We reach a high point on the walk of 2200m. Afterwards we follow the now solidified lava flows downhill through the pine forests to 1900m. Our waiting bus takes us back to our base at the seaside.

Today's 10 kilometre walk is expected to take around four hours with a total ascent of 500 metres and a descent of 250 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Villa Linda (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Ferry to the Aeolian Island of Vulcano; crater climb

This morning we drive to Milazzo on Sicily's north coast from where we take a ferry to the Aeolian island of Vulcano, named after Zeus' son Vulcan, the God of fire and metalworking. Although now dormant, Vulcano has erupted spectacularly throughout the centuries - the last dramatic explosion being only 100 years ago. In 183BC a huge eruption gave birth to 'Vulcanello' (the Little Volcano) visible from the port. Today, Vulcano puffs out a steady stream of gases and vapour. Even offshore the presence of the sulphur, which was once mined here, is obvious. Our walk to the crater rim provides us with great views of the Aeolian islands scattered around us. Afterwards we can cool off with a swim in the sea. We return to

Milazzo by ferry and drive back to Giardini Naxos.

Today's seven kilometre walk is expected to take around three hours with a total ascent and descent of 386 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Villa Linda (or similar)

Grade: **Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Monte Venere walk with amazing coastal views

Our walk today is a little closer to home. We drive to Castelmola, a medieval village overlooking nearby Taormina and starting point for a 250m ascent up to the summit of Monte Venere. The views from here are simply amazing - from the Strait of Messina and all along the Ionian coastline south to Syracuse, Mount Etna and the Alcantarra Valley. Following old mule tracks through unspoilt typical Mediterranean scrub we follow in the footsteps of Freida Von Richthofen, the wife of author D.H. Lawrence. It's said her amorous adventures with a mule handler here were the inspiration behind the novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. In spring the mountain is abundant with wild orchids.

Today's 13 kilometre walk is expected to take around four hours with a total ascent of 385 metres and a descent of 545 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Villa Linda (or similar)

Grade: **Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Free day; options to visit Taormina or 'Godfather' mountain towns

Today has been left free to relax on the beach and/or visit Taormina which is just 4 km away and easily accessible by public bus or taxi. Perched on a cliff overlooking the Ionian Sea, this pretty town is home to many historic churches and a number of lively bars and cafes as well as a Graeco-Roman theatre which is famous for one of the most iconic views in Sicily - that of snow-capped Etna acting as a backdrop to the remarkably preserved columned stage. It was a favourite place during the days of the 'Grand Tour' and was frequented by Goethe, Edward Lear, D.H. Lawrence and many others. If enough people are interested it is also possible to organize a trip to the scenic mountain towns of Savoca and Forza D'Agro, where the film The Godfather was shot.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Villa Linda (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Walking in the Pantalica Gorge; visit to Syracuse

We head south today to the area inland from Syracuse where our walk explores the Pantalica Gorge, a deep limestone ravine that has been carved out by the Anapo and Calcinarra rivers. The gorge is also a UNESCO-listed World Heritage Site that is home to over 4000 burial chambers. Peppering the sides of the canyon, the necropolis was built between the 13th and 8th centuries BC. For several centuries before Greek colonization, Pantalica was undoubtedly one of the main sites of eastern Sicily, dominating the surrounding territory. We enjoy an easy hike into and along the bottom of the gorge which is home to a flourishing variety of flora including holm oak, wild sage and thyme, giant fennel and plane trees to enjoy a picnic lunch beside the Anapo River. After our walk we drive on to visit Syracuse on the east coast. During the Greek Classical Period, this 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. We plan to take a stroll on the island of Ortygia where you will have some free time to visit some of the ancient landmarks including the site of the mythological spring of Arethusa and Temple of Apollo.

Today's eight kilometre walk is expected to take around three-and-a-half hours with a total ascent and descent of 450 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Villa Linda (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Hiking in the Lake District of the Nebrodi Mountains

Today we head inland to the one of Sicily's most unspoilt wild areas, the Nebrodi Mountains, a gently undulating range that runs along the north east of Sicily and much of which is a National Park. Our easy walk crosses an upland plateau along trails through meadows grazed by horses and sheep to Lake Trearie (1435m) where we enjoy a picnic lunch with typical Sicilian cheese, salami and maybe even a some wine!

Today's nine-and-a-half kilometre walk is expected to take around four hours with a total ascent of 550 metres and a descent of 400 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Villa Linda (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Giardini Naxos

The trip ends this morning after breakfast in Giardini Naxos. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to depart from Catania Fontanarossa Airport (CTA), which is around an hour's drive from the hotel.



Trip information

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

Sicily

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.

Savoca and Forza D'Agro - Visit the scenic mountain villages where the film 'The Godfather' was shot €45pp.

Clothing

You will need light layers of clothing for walking during the day and a fleece and waterproof jacket as temperatures can drop on Etna and in the Nebrodi 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. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Trainers are not recommended but you can take trainers/sandals for relaxing and other sightseeing. We suggest that on international flights you either

carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of luggage and a daypack

Unfortunately it does occasionally happen that luggage does not always reach its destination on the same flight as its owner, or possibly it may be damaged in transit. If you are unlucky enough for this to occur, it is important that you file a PIR (Property Irregularity Report) with the airline before leaving the airport. This is essential when you come to make a claim either against the airline or from your travel insurance company

Equipment

You should bring a 2 litre water bottle, sunhat, sunglasses and sunscreen. Trekking poles are recommended.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£5.00 - 10.00	£15.00 - 20.00	£2.00 - 4.00	£1.00 - 2.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
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.

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, Boat, Ferry

Accommodation notes

Hotel Villa Linda is a small and friendly family-run hotel situated in the peaceful Recanati area of Giardini Naxos, just a couple of minutes walk from Recanati Beach, there are a number of restaurants, bars and a small supermarket close by. The well-appointed en suite bedrooms are air-conditioned and include a flat-screen satellite TV, hairdryer and safe. Free Wi-Fi is available. The seaside resort of Giardini Naxos is just a few kilometres to the south of Taormina, which is easily reached by bus, and is an ideal location for striking out to explore the excellent and varied walking on offer in eastern Sicily.

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 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development 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 U.K., CAN, US, AUS and NZ citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

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 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.

Maximum altitude (m)

2250

Included activities

Please note that the summit treks on Etna and Stromboli are weather and volcanic activity dependent. It's possible that the local authorities may decide to close the summits with little or no notice. Should this occur alternative walks will be arranged. Due to the volcanic dust and sulphur fumes on the volcanoes,

this trip may not be suitable for asthma sufferers or customers with heart conditions.

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

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES		
Day 2	10km	4hrs
Day 3	7km	3hrs
Day 4	13km	3.5hrs
Day 5		
Day 6	8km	3.5hrs
Day 7	9.5km	4hrs

Walking grade

Easy to moderate

Trek details

Walks on 5 days for between 3 to 4 hours each day. Terrain varies from rocky underfoot to compacted volcanic materials. Daily ascents/descents average around 400m.

Max walking altitude (m)

2250

Additional Information



Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**