# SICILY TOUR

Easter Festivals of Sicily

 1st – 11th April 2023

Deeply Catholic places celebrate Easter with greatest ceremony and energy, and places of deepest Catholic history own the richest traditions. Christianity in Sicily goes back to only two decades after the Crucifixion, an older Christianity than any place outside of the Holy Land. Our public ceremonies however, most strongly reflect the six centuries of medieval Spanish rule. On this tour, we will cross the island searching out the most evocative of Sicily’s Easter events. Not only processions and drama, but there are special Easter foods for saints and sinners to share, including "turrunari", "cubbaita", "giuggiulena", “cicirata", and "pignoccata". And in between the high points of Sicilian “Pasquale”, we will visit the high points of Sicilian legend, history, and natural beauty.

**1st April,** **Saturday** -- Arrive in Catania. We meet you at the airport and take you to Siracusa

**(incl**), checking into a charming hotel in Ortigia, the heart of ancient Syracuse with views

over the sea. We’ll have a welcome and group meeting.We start settling in and getting

oriented with a walk around the incredible island-peninsula of Ortigia, its rich history,

palaces, narrow lanes, Jewish Quarter, and shops. Welcome dinner at a great Siracusa restaurant **(incl)** and overnight in Siracusa ***(Hotel Livingston)***

**2nd April, Palm Sunday** – We look at the glories of Siracusa, at its height, the greatest of

 ancient Greek cities, visiting the Greek Theatre, Ear of Dionysius, and Roman Amphitheatre. Possibility to attend the Palm Sunday services at the amazing Cathedral of Siracusa, still incorporating the columns of an ancient Greek Temple to Athena.*Apericena*

 in Siracusa  **(incl)** and overnight ***(Hotel Livingston)***

**3rd April, Monday** –We travel south of Siracusa to visit the charming town of Noto, a world

 heritage site. From here we drive to Modica and its chocolate brought to the island by the Spanish. We visit a dairy farm where the Puglisi family treat us to their produce at

lunch (**incl**). Then off to Ragusa Ibla and overnight. ***(San Giorgio Palace Hotel)***

**4th April, Tuesday** –We departRagusa for Piazza Armerina.

 Here, we will visit one of the greatest of Roman Imperial villas (Villa Romana del Casale). After lunch on your own, we take an afternoon drive on scenic roads to Agrigento. Here we find the Greeks again, and temples the equal to those in Greece which we walk in the company of a great local guide. Seafood dinner **(incl)** and overnight in Agrigento. ***(Colleverde Hotel)***

**5th April, Wednesday -** We move along the coast to theGreek city of Selinunte, a splendid group of temples on lovely rolling seacoast. Continuing to Marsala, we enjoy a winery tour and tasting at Donnafugata winery **(incl).** Then we visit the salt flats off Mozia where salt has been harvested for three thousand years. Pizza dinner (**incl)** and overnight in Marsala. ***(Hotel Carmine)***

**6th April, Maundy Thursday** –In Marsala, we'll see the re-enactment of Christ's passion, an

 extremely moving experience of his trial, torture and crucifixion. Free time to enjoy this

 charming little town. Overnight in Marsala. (***Hotel Carmine***.)

**7th April, Good Friday** –Off for an unguided visit to the Temple at Segesta. We go up the

 mountain of Erice to tour the town founded by Aphrodite and prominent in the stories of Hercules, Æneas, and Carthaginian and Roman history and religion. We’ll pay a visit to the

 confectionary shop of Maria Grammatico, made famous by Mary Simeti’s book ***Bitter Almonds***. After lunch (**incl**), we descend to Trapani where one of Sicily’s more famous

 processions occur. “I misteri” is a parade of a group of 20 sculpted religious statues from 17th and 18th centuries. For over sixteen hours they process, through the night, from Good Friday to Holy Saturday. Overnight at (***Hotel Carmine***.)

**8th April, Saturday** –The morning begins with a visit to the great cathedral of Monreale. After

 lunch, (not Inc) we visit other sites in Norman and Spanish Palermo. Dinner at Altri Tempi restaurant (incl) and overnight in Palermo in an historic hotel ***(Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa).***

**9th April, Easter Sunday** –We go to Piana degli Albanesi, the Greek Orthodox village where the

 girls and women of the town parade in 15th-century costumes. After the mass, there's a moving parade of the holy veil. Drive past Mount Etna and then onto Taormina. Overnight in a wonderful hotel with views over the sea. (***Hotel Montetauro)***

**10th April, Easter Monday** ––We visit the Greco Roman theatre and then you have the rest of the

 day to enjoy this lovely town. Farewell pizza dinner (incl) (***Hotel Montetauro)***

**11th April, Tuesday -** We will take you to Catania airport for your flight home. **(incl)**

**Cost: 3570 euros per person in double occupancy.**

**Tour Cost Includes**:

 \* Bed and Breakfast accommodation on twin-sharing basis. All accommodation will be of a

four-star standard, specially selected by us for quality, ambience, and the friendliness of the

staff.

 \* 10 breakfasts and 8 other meals as indicated in the itinerary. All meals include wine and

 water.

 \* 1 wine tasting.

 \* All entrance fees.

 Dairy farm visit

 \* An English-speaking Sicily Tour host / guide to be with you throughout the tour.

 \* All presentations will be in English or an interpreter will be present.

 \* Air-conditioned chauffeur-driven bus or car throughout the tour.

 \* All applicable government taxes, service charges, and paperwork.

 \* Transport to and from airports.

 **Tour Cost Does Not Include**:

 \* Airfare to and from Catania Fontana Rossa Airport.

 \* Passport applications and fees. Passports are required for entrance into Italy.

 \* Travel or health insurance.

 \* Meals or beverages not specified.

 \* Items or concerns of a personal nature.

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