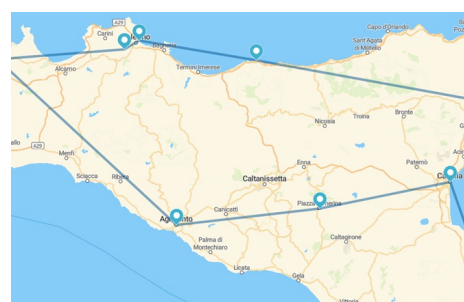




Italy (Sicily), 8 Days · Tailor-made by car

Sicily Route, from Palermo to Erice

Sicily offers travellers a historical, artistic, cultural and culinary melting pot difficult to find anywhere else in Europe. Its genuine atmosphere, its maritime feel, the hustle-and-bustle of its capital, its authentic cities and stunning landscapes such as the volcano Mount Etna make this Mediterranean jewel the ideal place to soak up the Italian "dolce vita". Drive around the most authentic Sicily, full of smells, sounds and tastes. With your rental car, you'll enjoy unique experiences at your own pace. The fascinating drive from cosmopolitan Palermo to medieval Erice winds through jaw-dropping landscapes. Lying ahead on the tour are Greek temples and archaeological sites such as Tindari, Selinunte, Segesta and the Valle dei Templi in Agrigento; fabulous Roman settlements such as the Villa Romana del Casale; spectacular Norman temples like the Cathedral of Monreale; stunning beaches such as Cefalù and Giardini Naxos; and elegant baroque cities like Syracuse. Historical cities such as Palermo, Taormina and Catania invite travellers to explore their many hidden corners and discover monuments and interesting museums, stroll through bustling markets such as Ballarò (Palermo) and Pescheria (Catania), and savour delicious cuisine accompanied by excellent local wines and spirits. So let's get touring this unique land that once attracted the Greeks, Romans, Carthaginians, Spanish, Byzantine and French.



CULTURAL

Departure date: Departures from July 2026 till June 2027

From: Cork, Shannon, Dublin

Travel details

● DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - PALERMO

Flight departure from the city of origin to Palermo and rental car pick-up. Sicily entices travellers with fantastic cities such as Palermo. An important trading port since Phoenician times and located along a sweeping bay, this city is the ideal starting point to explore the fascinating island of Sicily. The cultures of East and West intermingled here for centuries, and Palermo is today a vibrant and modern city which houses a fascinating historical heritage and an important artistic and cultural legacy. Its history is still alive in the bustling streets and the old quarter maintains a seductive oriental feel. Feel the Mediterranean soul of the city and its multitude of leisure and entertainment opportunities; travel back to the Golden Age in Quattro Canti, where you can reflect on the transience of life at the impressive Catacombs of the Capuchins, a burial place for the upper classes; attend a concert at the Teatro Massimo, the third largest in Europe; hop from bar to bar around the bustling Piazza Olivella; admire the fabulous Oratorio del Rosario (Church of San Domenico) by the famous artist Anton van Dyck; marvel at the cultural mix of Sicilian architectural treasures such as the Cathedral and the Palatine Chapel, within the 12th-century Norman Palace; learn about Sicily's important past at the Regional Archaeological Museum, one of the most outstanding in its field in Europe; discover the miracles attributed to Santa Rosalia, the patron saint of the city; stroll around the colourful and bustling Ballaro street market; and savour delicious food and Sicilian wines at the famous trattorias in the old town...

Overnight stay in Palermo.

● DAY 2 · PALERMO - CEFALÚ - TINDARI - TAORMINA

After enjoying Palermo, we'll set off to the captivating town of Taormina. We'll stop off en route at the seaside town of Cefalú, located about 69 kilometres from the capital. Sheltered by the famous Rocca di Cefalú, a hill that commands a magnificent view of the city and the Temple of Diana, this former fishing village with a medieval air boasts beautiful golden beaches, excellent tourist facilities and a lively atmosphere, all of which attract national and international visitors. (Note: Cefalú tends to be very busy in summer. In the winter months, life is concentrated around the central Corso Ruggero). Immortalised in the film "Cinema Paradiso", it's one of the best-preserved enclaves that allude to Sicily's Norman past. The Piazza Duomo cherishes treasures such as the magnificent twelfth-century Arab-Norman cathedral, with its Byzantine mosaics and its beautiful cloister, the monastery of Santa Caterina (now the City Hall) and the Episcopal Palace. Back on the road. If you have time, you can visit Tindari, where you can see the remains of the Greek city of Tyndaris. Perched atop a hill, it commands stunning panoramic views of the coastline. Nearby is the beloved Shrine of La Madonna Nera (the Black Madonna), one of the main points of pilgrimage on the island. The last leg of the tour celebrates the chicest town of Sicily: the elegant Taormina. Once there, we'll discover one of the cities that best reflects the historic soul of this fascinating island with Greek, Roman, Byzantine and medieval monuments... Sicily's first tourist resort, it's a perfectly preserved medieval jewel swathed in bougainvillea. Peppered with romantic corners and charming little squares, its beauty dazzled writers such as Truman Capote, Thomas Mann or Goethe; royals and aristocrats such as William II; and film stars like Greta Garbo, Cary Grant, Orson Welles and Rita Hayworth... Today, a steady trickle of tourists come here every day. Its monumental Teatro Greco (3rd century BC) overlooking the Etna, Bay of Naxos and the Ionian Sea is spectacular.

Overnight stay in Taormina.

● DAY 3 · TAORMINA - VOLCANO ETNA - CASTELMOLA - GIARDINI NAXOS - TAORMINA

We'll leave Taormina first thing in the morning to embark upon one of the most exciting stages of the tour: the climb to the majestic Mount Etna! A must-do excursion, weather permitting. Visiting the largest active volcano in Europe will give you an insight into the intense volcanic activity on the island and also the chance to enjoy unique views of the region. With a majestic profile dominating the east of the island, it's a place where nature, culture and history come together to form a unique environment. (Note: The tour, which will take about 3 or 4 hours, is not included. Always follow the safety guidelines. Because of the unpredictable nature of the volcano, visiting with a guide is recommended). Etna has two main entrances, one to the south and one to the north. The south side is the one most tourists use and provides easier access to the smouldering craters. If you arrive by road, follow the signs for "Etna Sud" to the "Rifugio Sapienza", about 18 kilometres from Nicolosi. At this point, you'll have to park the car and plan your uphill ascent, which is divided into two stretches. On the first stretch, you can trek your way up or take the "Funivia dell'Etna" cable car. The second part of the climb must be done on a 4x4 bus. Tip: make sure you're well equipped with comfortable shoes, warm clothes and sunglasses. In the afternoon, we'll head back to Taormina. If you wish, you can take a detour to the nearby medieval town of Castelmola, which despite tourism has managed to preserve its ancient charm. There you can visit the castle, standing 530 metres high and overlooking the sea. (Note: Cars are not allowed in the centre of Castelmola. We recommend parking on the outskirts. If you want to have a drink, the San Giorgio bar is a true institution). And if it gets hot and you fancy a dip, you can head off to the beaches of Giardini Naxos.

Overnight stay in Taormina.

● DAY 4 · TAORMINA - SYRACUSE - CATANIA

After strolling around its hidden corners, we'll leave this charming town and set off to discover some of the baroque villages on this Mediterranean island. Our next stop will be Syracuse (World Heritage Site), a fascinating city influenced by a host of civilisations and cultures. Founded between 734-733 BC, it extends along the sea near the island of Ortigia, linked to the mainland by a bridge. Considered one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world, the likes of Plato, Archimedes and Aeschylus once walked its streets. A great deal of its allure lies in the amazing fusion of its Greco-Roman past with 18th-century architecture, giving rise to a truly unique destination. Today, monuments such as the Temple of Minerva (transformed into a Christian cathedral), the Fountain of Arethusa, the Temple of Apollo and the Roman amphitheatre are reminders of its glorious past. (Note: You can divide the visit into two parts: one around the Archaeological Park and the other on the island of Ortigia). After lunch we'll head to Catania the second largest city in Sicily, located about 66 kilometres away. With great transport connections and an outstanding nightlife, its elegant baroque centre was built with volcanic stone from the Etna eruption of 1669. (Note: The city centre is a World Heritage Site). In the lively Piazza Duomo, you'll find some of the main sights such as the Cathedral dedicated to Saint Agatha, the Fontana dell'Elefante and La Pescheria market... If you fancy a bit of retail therapy, head over to Via Etnea, as it has a great mix of cafes, shops and boutiques. Try out the typical "pasta alla norma".

Overnight stay in Catania.

DAY 5 · CATANIA - VILLA ROMANA DEL CASALE - PIAZZA ARMERINA - VALLE DEI TEMPLI - AGRIGENTO

Departure to Agrigento to discover its magnificent Valle dei Templi (Valley of Temples). On the way, we recommend stopping at Piazza Armerina to visit the magnificent Villa Romana del Casale, a fascinating third-century hunting lodge which may have belonged to Emperor Marcus Aurelius Maximus. The Villa has 50 rooms and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Having been buried under mud for centuries, it was rediscovered in the 1950s in a perfect state. The Roman floor mosaics are magnificent and one of the best-preserved examples in the world. (Note: To enjoy this fascinating site without huge crowds, it's best to visit the Villa early in the morning or around midday, as long as it isn't too hot. For convenience, leave your car at the Villa car park). After a drive of around 1 hour and 30 minutes, we'll arrive at the famous Valle dei Templi in Agrigento. Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, the ancient Akragas was the heart of one of the most important and flourishing cities of Magna Graecia. The Acropolis, jutting out over a turquoise sea, was once considered back in the past "the most beautiful city of mortals". Today it's one of the most visited sites in Sicily. (Note: The Regional Archaeological Museum and the famous Valle dei Templi can be seen in roughly 2 to 3 hours. The Valley is divided into three sections, all near to the car park, the information office and ticket office). Before setting out today, check the opening and closing hours of both the Villa Romana del Casale and the Valle dei Templi so you can plan lunch.

We'll end the day wandering through the old town of Agrigento and savouring some delicious Sicilian cuisine.

Overnight stay in Agrigento.

DAY 6 · AGRIGENTO - SELINUNTE - SEGESTA - ERICE

We'll leave early for Erice.

Two archaeological treasures lie ahead: the sites of Selinunte and Segesta, about an hour from one another depending on traffic and the road you decide to take. The important archaeological site of Selinunte (7th century BC) is one of the most spectacular places we'll find en route. From the nearby Marinella beach, you can enjoy the sea while admiring the magnificent ruins. Onward to Segesta, one of the most impressive Doric temples that still exists in the world (5th century BC). Crowning a secluded spot, there are still many legends surrounding its origin.

Our onward journey takes us to Trapani. Before reaching this town, we'll turn onto the SP3 road to Erice. Despite being crowded with tourists in high season, this charming town at 750 metres above sea level, has preserved its medieval charm and fairytale image. The views from Mount Eryx and the Balio gardens are magnificent. On a clear day, you can even see Etna and the coast of Tunisia. Next to the garden is the Castle of Venus and the Temple of Venus. This goddess is closely linked to the fascinating history of the town, which is famous for its ceramic works and excellent rugs. If you have time, take a trip out to Trapani. (Note: Check the opening and closing hours of the archaeological sites. The SP3 is a narrow, panoramic road with lots of curves. If you prefer not to take this fourteen-kilometre journey you can park in Trapani and go up to Erice from Trapani on the modern panoramic cable car. The cable car is an excellent vantage point from which to view the city, the sea and the vast salt pans).

Overnight stay in Erice.

DAY 7 · ERICE - MONREALE - PALERMO

The last day of this fascinating tour will be dedicated to exploring the city of Palermo and its surroundings. About 30 minutes from the capital is the charming town of Monreale, with its impressive Arab-Norman cathedral overlooking Palermo from the famous Conca d'Oro (Golden Shell). The Cathedral, built by Norman king William II, is one of the wonders of the Middle Ages and among the finest examples of Norman architecture to be found in Sicily. With its 6,500 square metres of mosaics, from which a huge depiction of Christ emerges, it is an absolute gem. Take this opportunity to have an espresso or a gelato on the bustling Piazza Guglielmo, dotted with palm trees and cute bars and cafés. From the square, you can go over to Belvedere, which commands magnificent views over the Gulf of Palermo. (Note: The excursion to Monreale may take 3 to 4 hours. To avoid large crowds, it's best to visit early in the morning or the evening). We'll round off the day in Palermo, whose contrasts, splendour, decadence and the mix of architectural styles such as Norman, Florentine or Baroque will continue to amaze us. Now time to discover Palermo's nightlife and trendy restaurants!

Overnight stay in Palermo.

● DAY 8 · PALERMO - CITY OF ORIGIN

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

Your trip includes

Your trip includes

✓ Return flight.

✓ Stay in selected hotel in Taormina.

✓ Stay in selected hotel in Catania.

✓ Stay in selected hotel in Agrigento.

✓ Stay in selected hotel in Erice.

✓ Stay in selected hotel in Palermo.

✓ Selected meal plan in Taormina.

✓ Selected meal plan in Catania.

✓ Selected meal plan in Agrigento.

✓ Selected meal plan in Erice.

✓ Selected meal plan in Palermo.

✓ Rent-a-car.

Your trip doesn't include

✗ Accommodation taxes in Sicily direct payment in facility.

✗ Possible toll charges.

✗ Insolvency protection.

Destinations Visited

Palermo



Cefalù



Taormina



Castelmola Messina



Giardini Naxos



Syracuse



Catania



Piazza Armerina



Agrigento



Erice



Monreale



Important remarks

- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far as possible.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.

