
GEEO ITINERARY

Northern Sicily

Day 1: Palermo Arrive at any time. Tonight, meet your tour leader and fellow travelers at the welcome meeting, then opt to head out for dinner and enjoy a Sicilian meal.

You may arrive in Palermo at any time today. There are no planned activities today, so check into our hotel and enjoy the city. We will have a group meeting in the evening around 6:00 p.m. There will be a note at the front desk to let you know the exact time and location of the meeting. The note will also tell you what time to meet in the lobby in the morning if you arrive too late for the meeting. If you miss this meeting, please don't worry; your tour leader will go over everything with you in the morning.

Day 2: Palermo/Cefalù (B) Enjoy an orientation walk in Palermo's historic city center. Drive to beautiful Cefalù and have another orientation walk. Your afternoon will be free for you to explore.

Head out for an orientation walk of Palermo's historic city center. The city has been the crossroad of many civilizations: Phoenicians, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, and Spaniards. You will see baroque and gothic façades, neoclassical theaters such as Teatro Massimo (the biggest in Italy and one of the largest in Europe), unusual squares such as Quattro Canti, and the majestic Palermo Cathedral. Continue to Cefalù, often cited as one of Italy's most beautiful townships, and stroll through cobbled streets to a picturesque cove by the beach. Enjoy a brief walk with your tour leader. The squares, streets, and churches of this medieval town are so postcard-pretty that it's no wonder director Giuseppe Tornatore chose to set parts of his much-loved film *Cinema Paradiso* here. With free time, observe local fishermen working on their boats, or simply wander around town. Cefalù's crescent-shaped beach is one of the most popular along the whole Sicilian coast. The Salita Saraceni is an enormous staircase that winds up through three tiers of city walls. Opt to take 30 to 45 minutes climbing up to the summit of La Rocca - from here, you'll have wonderful views of the town below. Opt to end the day with an aperitivo in Piazza Duomo and visit the 12th-century Duomo di Cefalù, one of the jewels in Sicily's Arab-Norman crown. Climb the towers for great views of the area. Approximate travel time: 1.5 hrs by private vehicle.

Day 3: Cefalù/Lipari (B) Travel to the Aeolian Islands, a small archipelago of volcanic lands. Spend the next few days exploring pockets of this coastal paradise.

Travel to the Aeolian Islands, a small archipelago of volcanic lands known as "the pearls of Italy" for their intriguing natural formations and named after Aeolus, the god of the winds. Take a car and ferry to reach Lipari, the largest of the Aeolian Islands, and enjoy a free afternoon to explore. Opt to visit the island's most popular swimming spot, the long, pebbly strip at Canneto, or take another short ferry (12 euros) to the island of Vulcano to see its active crater. The word *volcano*, and its equivalent in several European languages, derives from the name of this island, which in turn derives from Vulcan, the Roman god of fire. Approximate travel time: 2 hrs by private vehicle, 1 hr by ferry

Day 4: Lipari (B) Enjoy a free morning in Lipari. Later, head out for an excursion to explore the beautiful islands of Panarea and Stromboli by boat. End the day on an unforgettable sunset cruise.

Take the morning to relax or leisurely wander through Lipari. Later, set sail for a journey through the stunning Aeolian Islands, stopping at Panarea and Stromboli. On Panarea, visit Cala Junco beach and wander through the village. Then see Basiluzzo, the smallest of the Aeolian Islands. Continue to Stromboli and enjoy free time to explore local shops in town. As sunset approaches, cruise back to the islet of Stombolicchio and arrive just as it starts to get dark at the Scara del Fuoco, considered the best spot for viewing Mount Stromboli's eruptions. This is the last stop and, for many, the most awaited.

(Please note: this activity begins at 2 p.m. and ends at 10 p.m. We recommend bringing a sweater, as the evening breeze gets chilly aboard the boat!) Approximate travel time: 8 hrs by boat

Day 5: Lipari/Catania (B) Say goodbye to the Aeolian Islands and ferry back to the mainland, then continue to Taormina, one of Sicily's most visited destinations.

This morning, travel from Lipari to Milazzo by ferry and then finish the journey to Taormina by private vehicle. Once in Taormina, join your tour leader for a brief introduction to this beautifully situated hilltop town, once part of the "Grand Tour" many affluent Europeans took in the 18th and 19th centuries. After the orientation walk, enjoy free time when you may opt to visit the stunning Teatro Greco, an ancient Roman amphitheater with commanding views of Mount Etna. You could also visit the Corso Umberto I, Taormina's pedestrian-friendly, boutique-lined thoroughfare, or the Villa Comunale Gardens, beautiful public gardens that offer breathtaking views of the coast and Mt. Etna. Travel to Catania and opt to join your tour leader for another short walk around this elegant and lively city. Approximate travel time: 1 hr by ferry, 2.5 hrs by private vehicle (1.5 hrs Milazzo-Taormina, 1 hr Taormina-Catania)

Day 6: Catania (B) Enjoy an orientation walk with your tour leader to get your bearings in Catania. Then spend the rest of the day exploring Catania and its nearby attractions. Opt to book a full-day excursion with naturalist guides on Mount Etna, or stay in town and visit La Pescheria market or walk the Via Etnea.

In the morning, your tour leader will take you around Catania so you can get your bearings and see some of the city's main sites. If something catches your eye, there will be plenty of opportunity for you to return during your free time after the walk. The rest of the day is yours to explore. Catania's central piazza is a set piece of contrasting lava and limestone, surrounded by buildings in the unique local baroque style and crowned by the grand Cattedrale di Sant'Agata. La Pescheria, Catania's raucous fish market, takes over the streets behind Piazza del Duomo every weekday morning and is pure street theatre (open from 7 a.m. - 2 p.m.). Shoppers will enjoy a stroll through Catania's main shopping street, Via Etnea, which runs straight from Piazza del Duomo to the foothills below Etna. Visit the Giardino Bellini gardens and watch local life unfold.

Day 7: Catania (B) Depart at any time.

The program ends today, and you can depart Catania at any time. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEE0 trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEE0 will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs). If you don't see a program that interests you that pairs with this trip, but still would like to extend your time abroad, let us know. We will work with you to find a non-teacher trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Even better, if you are an educator, we can still offer you a discounted price on the trip you choose!