
GEEO ITINERARY

Southern Sicily

Day 1: Catania 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 Catania 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. If your schedule allows, arrive a day or two early to spend more time in Catania, the second-largest city and an important economic hub in Sicily. It proudly displays its heritage and culture in museums like the Basilica Sant'Agata and the Museo Civici. There are also plenty of opportunities for day trips and outdoor excursions, such as a guided tour of Mount Etna to learn about the legendary history of the ancient volcano from local naturalist guides.

Day 2: Catania/Syracuse (B, L) Travel to Syracuse. Take a cooking class on arrival and learn how to make Arancini, an iconic Sicilian specialty, to enjoy as a light lunch. After, go on an orientation walk with your tour leader.

This morning, we travel to Syracuse, an enchanting city by the Ionian Sea that was once at the center of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. After you arrive, learn how to prepare a delicious snack enjoyed beyond the borders of Sicily: deep-fried arancini, a ball of creamy risotto rice typically filled with a savory cheese or meat filling. Later, explore the old town's baroque piazzas and medieval side streets on an orientation walk with your tour leader. Approximate travel time: 1 hr by private vehicle

Day 3: Syracuse (B) Enjoy a full free day in Syracuse. Opt to visit the impressive Parco Archeologico della Neapolis, or travel to nearby Noto, a UNESCO World Heritage-listed city renowned for its baroque architecture built with unique golden limestone.

During a free day in Syracuse, opt to uncover the city's ancient past at the Parco Archeologico della Neapoli, home to Syracuse's sprawling Teatro Greco. First constructed in the 5th century BC, today visitors can wander the grounds and imagine what 2nd-century gladiator combats and horse races at the Anfiteatro Romano may have looked like. You may also take a local bus to Noto, about an hour southwest of Syracuse, home to one of Sicily's most beautiful historic centers. Stroll through the Arco di Trionfo to reach Corso Vittorio Emanuele and visit the majestic 18th-century Noto Cathedral.

Day 4: Syracuse/Agrigento (B) Travel to the baroque city of Ragusa before heading to the medieval hilltop town of Piazza Armerina. Continue to Agrigento.

This morning, we drive to Ragusa and enjoy some free time to explore the alleyways and the squares of this hilltop city, rich with baroque architecture. Later, we visit the world's most varied collection of Roman mosaics at Villa Romana del Casale, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Piazza Armerina. Dating back to the 4th century and known for their incredibly well-preserved state *in situ*, or in their original location, the mosaic tiles beautifully depict ancient scenes of hunting, fishing, and athletics. Afterward, continue to Agrigento on Sicily's southwestern coast. Approximate travel time: 5-5.5 hrs by private vehicle (1.75 hrs Syracuse-Ragusa, 1.75 hrs Ragusa-Piazza Armerina, 1.75 hrs Piazza Armerina-Agrigento)

Day 5: Agrigento/Trapani Take a guided tour of the Valley of the Temples, one

of Sicily's best-known attractions. Continue to Trapani, stopping en route in Marsala to see some of Europe's oldest salt marshes.

Visit the Valley of the Temples, where you will learn the history of this magnificent site and explore the ruins of its seven temples nestled on a ridge below Agrigento. Regarded as the best example of ancient Hellenic architecture in Sicily, the archaeological site's oldest structures date back to the 5th century. Explore the ruins of the Temple of Concordia, with its majestic columns, and learn about the site's history from a local guide. While en route to Trapani, stop in Marsala to visit some of Europe's oldest traditional salt marshes, where sea salt is still harvested in the same way it has been for hundreds of years. Approximate travel time: 3-3.5 hrs by private vehicle (2.5 hrs Agrigento-Marsala, 45 mins Marsala-Trapani)

Day 6: Trapani Enjoy a free day to explore the charms of Trapani and its nearby towns. Opt to cruise the idyllic Egadi Islands, spend the day hiking at a nature reserve filled with local flora and fauna, or hop on a funicular to explore the walled town of Erice.

Spend a full day exploring Trapani on your own, or opt to participate in one of the excursions below. Full-day Egadi Islands excursion (50-75 euros per person): The crystal-clear seas off western Sicily are home to the idyllic Aegadian islands of Favignana and Levanzo. Cruise through the coastal waters and drop anchor in beautiful spots around the islands. Half-day Erice excursion (9 euros per person): Head to the medieval hilltop town of Erice, a walled 12th-century village perched high above the sea. Take a cable car from Trapani's city center to reach Erice and spend a few hours wandering its picturesque streets. Full-day Riserva Naturale dello Zingaro excursion (50-70 euros per person): Visit Sicily's first nature reserve, Zingaro Nature Reserve, located about an hour from Trapani. Perfect for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts, you can spend the day hiking on spectacular trails that overlook the Mediterranean Sea.

Day 7: Trapani/Palermo Travel to Monreale to visit the 11th-century Monreale Cathedral, intricately decorated with thousands of gold mosaic tiles. Continue to Palermo.

On the last full day of our tour, we drive to Monreale to visit the World Heritage-listed Cattedrale di Monreale, considered one of Europe's greatest examples of Norman architecture with a heavy Moorish and Byzantine influence. Continue on to Palermo and admire panoramic views of the Conca d'Oro (Golden Valley) and the Tyrrhennian Sea. Upon arrival, enjoy free time in Palermo or join your tour leader on another orientation walk around the city center's squares and streets. Approximate travel time: 2 hrs by private vehicle (1.5 hrs Trapani-Monreale, 15-30 mins Monreale-Palermo)

Day 8: Palermo Depart at any time.

The program ends today, and you can depart Palermo 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!