

ITINERARY

Day 1 – Oct 16, 2018 - U.S./Italy: Depart from U.S. for your Overnight flight to Italy. (Dinner and Breakfast-in flight)

Day 2 – Oct 17, 2018 - Catania: Arrive in Catania & Taormina. Welcome to the southern part of Italy, Sicily Island! After clearing customs meet your tour manager who will escort you throughout your journey. We will reach our centrally located hotel in Taormina, in time for check in and a little rest before participating in an introduction to the city with our guide. Standing high on Monte Tauro and dominating the two grand sweeping bays below, Taormina is Sicily's best-known resort and it is a strong contender for the title of the "most beautiful place on earth"! Taormina forms a balcony overlooking the sea, facing Mount Etna. This climactic resort of worldwide reputation has a peaceful atmosphere, beautiful monuments, spectacular views and lovely gardens that invite and exploration on foot. The coast below Taormina is fascinating. Our guided walking tour of Taormina includes Via Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, which is on the site of the Roman Forum, the Palazzo Corvala, the recently unearthed remains of an imperial Roman bath, and the magnificent Teatro Greco, a Roman reconstruction of an earlier Greek theatre. Then you will enjoy some free time to visit the local cafes or for some shopping. Tonight, enjoy a welcome dinner in a local restaurant. (B, D)

Day 3 – Oct 18, 2018 - Siracusa: Today after breakfast, we depart to discover Siracusa with our local guide. An ancient city, founded by the Greeks from Corinth, and once the most important city in the Western World. Siracusa reached its zenith in the 5th century BC when it ruled all of Sicily. In the unique Parco Archeologico, the impressive ruins include the magnificent Greek Theatre, one of the biggest and best preserved in the entire Mediterranean, situated adjacent to a large Roman Coliseum and an ancient quarry possessing such remarkable acoustics that Caravaggio called it "Orecchio de Dionisio" (the ear of Dionysius). The quarry was once a prison for 7000 Athenian prisoners of war. We then visit the beautiful island of Ortigia where we will enjoy a tasty fish lunch. In Ortigia we explore the Piazza Archimede, the legendary Fonte Aretusa (Fountain of Arethusa), and Siracusa's historically unique Duomo, a building that has been a Greek Temple, a Moslem mosque and a Christian church at various times in its long history, one which is clearly visible in the architecture of the building. Have some free time before going back to Taormina (B, L)

Day 4 – Oct 19, 2018 - Etna: After breakfast, we will drive along the coastline, renowned for its beautiful scenery, stopping to ascend the slopes of massive Mt. Etna. The volcano totally dominates the life and landscape of eastern Sicily. Some villages and roads are built from lava and the flows have cut great swaths through the valley that have ultimately provided the extremely fertile soil of the island. The views are impressive as we ascend the snow-capped mountain. Enjoy a walk between the craters and learn the history of this active volcano. Then proceed to a local winery for a visit and tasting and a lunch made of local products. Your evening at leisure. (B, L)

Day 5 – Oct 20, 2018 - Agrigento & Palermo: After breakfast we check out and depart for Palermo. We will stop along the way to visit Piazza Armerina and Agrigento. Our first stop is in Piazza Armerina to visit the magnificent Villa Romana del Casale at Piazza, an Imperial Roman villa in the southern interior. Excavations in 1950 in the rugged countryside at Casale slowly revealed the extensive rich villa, an Imperial Roman hunting lodge and a summer home that had been hidden and preserved under mud for over 700 years. After lunch on our own, we proceed to Agrigento where our sightseeing tour takes us to the ruins of the Valley of the Temples, where the city's ancient architects erected most of their sacred buildings during the fifth century BC. The four major temples are stunning, reflecting the wealth and luxury of ancient Agrigento. The panoramic view of the Valley of the Temples is truly grand, overlooking some of the most impressive Greek ruins of the Mediterranean. Arrive in Palermo in the evening. Check in and dinner at the hotel (B, D)

Day 6 – Oct 21, 2018 - Palermo & Naples: After breakfast at the Hotel we spend the day in Palermo Sicily's capital, where the architecture reflects its many conquerors over the centuries including Normans, Arabs, Asians, and Greeks with distinct styles ranging from Arabic to Baroque, from Norman to Art Nouveau. Our guided tour of Palermo will start in the city center. You will explore old avenues and Arabic neighborhoods, iconic cathedrals, Tetatro Massimo, Palermo's elegant Opera House (from outside). Your guided tour will also include the visit of the Palatine Chapel inside the Norman Palace. Then continue to Monreale, a small hill town. Enjoy the panorama from the "royal mountain," a mighty Norman cathedral hidden among the houses, and the distinguished beautiful Cloisters. Have lunch at local restaurant and be sure to include a cannoli for dessert!. Enjoy some free time in Palermo before boarding our overnight ship to Naples. (B, L)

Day 7 – Oct 22, 2018 - Naples & Pompeii: After breakfast on board, we approach Naples harbor and disembark for a visit. Naples, the capital of the Campania region, is well known for its history, art, culture, and especially, its traditional cuisine. We'll visit the city's historical center and tour the Old Town, Posillipo, Piazza del Plebiscito, San Carlo Theatre, its castles, and the remarkable Archeological Museum, which houses a vast collection of art and artifacts from both Pompeii and Herculaneum. In a city famous for its pizza, we absolutely must partake of a traditional pie at a local pizzeria! After lunch, we continue to Pompeii for a guided tour. An ancient Roman city frozen in time when it was buried by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 A.D., Pompeii is surely one of Italy's most famous and most extensive archeological sites. Now a UNESCO World Heritage site, the ancient city's remains and artifacts provide a fascinating picture of life as it was lived during the height of the Roman Empire in a popular Roman resort. In the afternoon we reach Sorrento located on the Amalfi Coast, or Costiera Amalfitana, a stunning coastline along the rugged mountains on the western coast of Italy. Poets and writers have described Sorrento as the land of colors and mermaids. Sorrento is indeed a very pretty city where kindness and hospitality are a combination that is handed down from one generation to the next. After check in and little time to rest we take a short orientation tour of the little town center followed by a nice traditional dinner at local restaurant. (B, L ,D)

Day 8 – Oct 23, 2018 - Amalfi & Positano: After breakfast, we depart to discover the Amalfi Coast which extends from Sorrento to Salerno in the region of Campania. Many miles of winding roads offer spectacular views of mountains and cliff formations that seem to plunge vertically into the sea. Explore the enchanting towns along the picturesque Costiera Amalfitana. We will visit Positano and glimpse at its buildings, clinging onto the rocks. We reach Amalfi, whose origins date back to both the Roman and Byzantine Empires. It once rivaled Genoa and Pisa in its maritime importance and still retains its fishing traditions today. The first view of Amalfi is unforgettable, with its tightly packed villas and palaces seeming to tumble down the cliff side into the fishing port and beach below. Once in Amalfi, we will also visit a Limoncello factory and taste some sweet liquor before returning to Sorrento in the afternoon. Enjoy evening at leisure and discover Sorrento on own. (B)

Day 9 – Oct 24, 2018 - Capri: After breakfast, you'll be transferred to Naples harbor for your journey to Capri by high-speed boat for an

experience of a lifetime! Capri is one of the most scenic islands in the world, and one of the most visited island in the South of Italy. It is surrounded by a unique natural beauty and an explosive glamour. The impressive Natural Arch, the beautiful Faraglioni (rocks) and the air filled perfume scent of the Mediterranean flowers and sea breeze, all come into play as you tour this earthly paradise. On arrival to “Marina Grande”, the port of Capri, we board our private motorboat and we enjoy a boat tour of the island to fully experience its magic views and spectacular blue colors. Then go back to marina Grande and transfer by minibus to Anacapri where you will enjoy some free time to visit Villa San Michele, located on the northeastern side of Anacapri, the home of Swedish doctor and writer Axel Munthe. Return to Capri, followed by some time at leisure to discover the famous Piazzetta where you’ll really enjoy the Caprese atmosphere. In the early afternoon, take a walk to Augustus' Gardens and have free time to see the narrow and elegant road of Capri, before returning to Sorrento and your hotel. Tonight, dinner is in a special setting at a beautiful farmhouse located in the green countryside just behind Sorrento. Some delicious dishes will delight your senses! (B, D)

Day 10 – Oct 25, 2018 - Caserta Royal Palace & Rome: After breakfast check out from Sorrento and depart for Rome. We will stop along the way to visit the Royal Palace in Caserta. The Royal Palace, in Italian Reggia di Caserta, is a former royal residence in Caserta, constructed for the Bourbon kings of Naples. It was the largest palace and probably the largest building erected in Europe in the eighteenth century. In 1996, the Palace of Caserta was listed among the World Heritage Sites on the grounds that it was "the swan song of the spectacular art of the Baroque", from which it adopted all the features needed to create the illusions of multidirectional space. The Royal Palace covers an area of more than 47,000 meters with approximately 1,200 rooms. Then, we proceed to Rome where we will arrive in the afternoon. The following three days will be spent to discover the ancient and modern aspects of this cosmopolitan city. Romans say the “Rome wasn’t built in a day”, nor can Rome be seen in a day. One could live in the Eternal City for years and still not see everything. It is hard to say what you will find most breathtaking: Etruscan tombs, Republican meeting rooms, imperial temples, early Christian churches, medieval bell towers, baroque basilicas or Renaissance palaces. Stop at a “trattoria” in Trastevere to try the local cuisine, sit outside of a café on the elegant Via Veneto or maybe shop in fashionable Via Condotti or, for a wonderful range of art, antiques and antiquities shops, visit Via Margutta. Later on, check in at our hotel and

have some free time to enjoy the city on your own. Later in the evening, enjoy a Rome by night tour. (B)

Day 11 – Oct 26, 2018 - Rome Vatican Museums: After breakfast at your hotel, depart for a guided tour of the Vatican Museums, Sistine Chapel and St. Peter’s Church. The Vatican Museums and their immense wealth of art, resulting from centuries of papal collections, offer an extraordinary experience. Amongst others, see the great masterpieces of Michelangelo, “The Last Judgment” in the Sistine Chapel. End the tour visiting St. Peter’s Basilica to admire the art treasures of the largest Roman Catholic Church in the world including Michelangelo’s Pietà. Afternoon will be at leisure (B)

Day 12 – Oct 27, 2018 - Rome Imperial Rome: After breakfast, depart for a guided tour to discover the splendor of the classic Roman Empire. Your experienced local guide will introduce you to the history of Imperial Rome walking along Via dei Fori Imperiali. Visit the Roman Forum, the most important archaeological area in the city and once the center of the public life; visit the Coliseum, the most famous monument of ancient Rome and an impressive testament to her past greatness. Afternoon is at leisure to experience Rome on your own. For your last night, enjoy a farewell dinner at a local Trattoria (B, D)

Day 13 – Oct 28, 2018 - Rome – U.S.: After breakfast, bid a fond goodbye to Italy as you depart Rome and transfer to the airport by private motor coach to the airport for your flight back to the US. (B).