Full Itinerary

ENTICING ITALY FROM MILAN TO SICILY

TALK TO OUR WELL TRAVELLED TEAM OF EXPERTS

0844 3350 197

Monday - Thursday 9:00am - 8:00pm, Friday 9:00am - 5:30pm (London time)

JOURNEY SNAPSHOT

ACTIVITY LEVEL:

Level 2

DESTINATION:

Enticing Italy

From Milan to Sicily

DURATION:

17 day / 16 nights

FLIGHT INFORMATION:

Please arrange your flights to arrive into Milan Malpensa Airport [MXP] on Day 1 and depart from Palermo Airport [PMO] on Day 17

PICKUP LOCATION:

Milan Malpensa Airport [MXP]

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OVERVIEW

23 May - 08 Jun, 2024

22 May - 07 Jun, 2025

After visiting the very best of Northern Italy, why not extend your stay and discover Sicily!

A fantastic tour offering all that is the very best of Italy. On our journey from Milan to Palermo we will visit the classic cities of Verona, Venice, Bologna, Florence, Pisa, Lucca and Rome. See spectacular Lake Maggiore, experience the magnificent scenery of Tuscany, walk in the footsteps of Roman emperors. We'll sample traditional food and wine, explore iconic buildings such as the Colosseum, St Mark's and the Leaning Tower of Pisa and visit some of the world's most famous museums that Italy has to offer. Then we will journey over to Sicily, the largest of the Mediterranean islands. Its rich history is reflected in sites like the Valley of the Temples and the Byzantine mosaics at the Cappella Palatina, a former royal chapel in the capital city Palermo. On Sicily's eastern edge is Taormina with its magnificent Greek Theatre and, not to forget, Mount Etna, one of Europe's highest active volcanoes. Sicily's pastries and desserts (dolci) are famous for their richness, and in the Sicilian heat why not try the refreshing drink granita di limone (ice and lemon slush) or enjoy a glass of Marsala, Sicily's most well-known wine.

ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAY 1 - Benvenuti in Italia!

DAY 2 - Magical Lake Maggiore

DAY 3 - Milan & Verona

DAY 4 - Venetian Highlights

DAY 5 - Bologna & Tuscany

DAY 6 - Discovering Florence

DAY 7 - Pisa & Lucca

DAY 8 - Chianti Vineyards & Rome

DAY 9 - Ancient Rome

DAY 10 - The Vatican City

DAY 11 - Arrivederci Roma - Benvenuti in Sicilia

DAY 12 - Taormina & Mount Etna

DAY 13 - Piazza Armerina & Agrigento

DAY 14 - Valley of the Temples, Monreale & Palermo

DAY 15 - Discovering Palermo

DAY 16 - Palermo's Hidden Markets

DAY 17 - Arrivederci Italia

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FULL ITINERARY

DAY 1 - BENVENUTI IN ITALIA!

Welcome to Italy! Upon arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel on the shores of Lake Maggiore.

This evening we will join our fellow travellers and enjoy a welcome drink and tour presentation, followed by dinner together in a nearby restaurant.

Included meals: Dinner
Accommodation: Grand Hotel Britsol, Stresa (2024) / Grand Hotel Dino, Baveno (2025)

DAY 2 - MAGICAL LAKE MAGGIORE

This morning we will enjoy a boat excursion to the Borromean Islands, which lie in the heart of Lake Maggiore.

Isola Bella, the largest of the three islands is our first stop, and home to the historic Borromeo Palace. The islands are private and still owned by the aristocratic Borromeo family, whose antecedent was St (and Pope) Charles Borromeo and whose currnet daughter is now married into the Monegasque Royal family. We will visit the palace and baroque gardens.

Enjoy the afternoon and evening at leisure in the lively lakeside town.

Included meals: Breakfast
Accommodation: Grand Hotel Britsol, Stresa (2024) / Grand Hotel Dino, Baveno (2025)

DAY 3 - MILAN & VERONA

We will depart after breakfast for a panoramic guided coach tour of Milan before heading east for Verona. Sights will include La Scala, Milan's world renowned opera house, Sforzesco Castle and the Cathedral amongst others.

We will then continue to Verona to discover the historic city, with its ampitheatre, famous piazzas and 'Juliet's Balcony'

We continue on Venice and its lagoon, our base for the next two nights.

Included meals: Breakfast
Accommodation: Hilton Molino Stucky, Venice (2024) / Hyatt Centric Murano (2025)

DAY 4 - VENETIAN HIGHLIGHTS

After breakfast, we will enjoy a guided walking tour of the main sights of Venice, including the Doge's Palace and St. Mark's Basillica (no entrances included).

After lunch at leisure, we will enjoy a seranaded gondola tour of the city's famous canals.

The rest of the day and evening will be free to explore Venice with your 24hour ACTV Tourist Venice Travelcard (unlimited travel including the water-buses) Perhaps take a boat tour to the islands of Murano and Burano where the famous glassware is produced or treat yourself to an Aperol cocktail in the sunshine!

Included meals: Breakfast
Accommodation: Hilton Molino Stucky, Venice (2024) / Hyatt Centric Murano (2025)

DAY 5 - BOLOGNA & TUSCANY

This morning we will continue our tour south towards Florence and Tuscany, stopping en-route at the city of Bologna, Italy's culinary capital and, yes, the home of Bolognese Sauce! We'll have lunch before continuing on our journey.

We'll continue to our Tuscan countryside retreat and relax with dinner at leisure in the hotel this evening.

Included meals: Breakfast & Lunch
Accommodation: Borgo San Luigi, Monteriggioni

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DAY 6 - DISCOVERING FLORENCE

We will depart after breakfast for Florence. On arrival we will be met by our local guide and taken on a walking tour of this historical city. We will see a host of famous sites such as the Galleria dell'Accademia (statue of David), Uffizi Gallery, Brunelleschi's Dome, Giotto's Bell Tower, St. John's Baptistry, Ponte Vecchio amongst others.

After all this exercise, it's time to relax and partake of a traditional gelato. The rest of the afternoon will be at leisure, before returning to our hotel

Included meals: Breakfast
Accommodation: Borgo San Luigi, Monteriggioni

DAY 7 - PISA & LUCCA

Following breakfast we will board our coach for a full day tour to Pisa and Lucca.

First stop will be Lucca for a walking tour of this highly attractive entirely-walled Renaissance town. Walking through the historical centre along the cobblestone streets we will see the Casa di Puccini, where the great opera composer was born which is now a house museum.

There will be time for lunch before we board the coach again and head off to Pisa. We will meet our guide for a tour of the Campo dei Miracoli (Miracles Square) comprising Duomo, Baptistry and the famous Leaning Tower, to which entrance is included for those who want to climb the steps!

Dinner will be together at our hotel.

Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner
Accommodation: Borgo San Luigi, Monteriggioni

DAY 8 - CHIANTI VINEYARDS & ROME

As we leave Florence behind we will drive through the picturesque Tuscan countryside and the Chianti region where we will stop at a classic Chianti vineyard for a presentation and wine tasting including local snacks/light lunch.

After re-boarding our coach we will continue south to the Eternal City that is Rome for the next 3 nights.

Included meals: Breakfast & Light Lunch
Accommodation: Villa Pamphili, Rome

DAY 9 - ANCIENT ROME

This morning we will have a guided city sightseeing tour by coach where we will discover Ancient Rome including visits to the Colosseum and Roman Forum (including skip-the-queue tickets and headsets).

The rest of the day and evening will be free to explore this amazing city, making our own way back to the hotel.

Included meals: Breakfast
Accommodation: Villa Pamphili, Rome

DAY 10 - THE VATICAN CITY

Another highlight will be the guided visit we are making today to the Vatican and its museums including the Sistine Chapel (including skip-the-queue tickets and headsets).

Like yesterday, the afternoon will be at leisure for more sightseeing or last minute shopping, making our own way back to the hotel.

This evening we will enjoy a Farewell Dinner together in a local restaurant/trattoria.

Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner
Accommodation: Villa Pamphili, Rome

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DAY 11 - ARRIVEDERCI ROMA - BENVENUTI IN SICILIA

Today we will leave Rome and journey over to the island of Sicily. We will depart the hotel by coach and transfer to Rome Airport for our short flight to Catania, a city located on the eastern part of the island. On arrival, we will board our waiting coach, meet up with our fellow travellers who arrived yesterday and drive north, along the coast, to the world famous hill-top resort of Taormina.

Tonight we will enjoy and welcome drink and get-together, followed by dinner in a local restaurant/trattoria.

Included meals: Breakfast and Dinner
Accommodation: Hotel Villa Diodoro, Taormina

DAY 12 - TAORMINA & MOUNT ETNA

This morning we will visit Taormina's greatest tourist attraction, Teatro Greco, a Greco-Roman theatre built into a rocky hillside. Although generally known as the 'Greek' Theatre, Taormina's historic open-air theatre owes much of its present appearance to the Romans. Designed with an unsurpassable backdrop of blue sea, coastline, distant smoking Etna, and inland mountains, we will wander around the theatre complex, the stage and backstage areas, as well see panoramic views from the curving rows of seats.

After some free time to get some lunch, we will depart by coach for a guided excursion to Mount Etna which is among Europe's tallest (and the world's most active) volcanoes. A UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2013, the volcano has shaped Sicilian history and continues to impact life on the island today. We will ascend the volcano by coach to Piazzale Rifugio Sapienza (6200ft). For those who wish to ascend further to around 8200ft there is the option of a cable-car/funicular (payable direct).**

Back at the hotel, the evening is at leisure.

(**This does not take you as far as the crater which is further uphill)

Included meals: Breakfast
Accommodation: Hotel Villa Diodoro, Taormina
Optional extras: Cable-car/Funicular (please ask for details)

DAY 13 - PIAZZA ARMERINA & AGRIGENTO

We depart after breakfast towards Agrigento, one of Sicily's finest ancient cities. On the way we will stop at Piazza Armerina, a pretty and historic town nestled in the heart of Sicily. Whilst here we will visit the truly astonishing classical mosaics at the Villa Romana del Casale, an important Unesco World Heritage Site due to its containing the most complex and largest collection of Roman mosaics in the world - there are 3535 square metres of them. We will continue to our hotel in Agrigento.

Dinner will be together this evening in a local restaurant.

Included meals: Breakfast and Dinner
Accommodation: Grand Hotel Mose, Agrigento

DAY 14 - VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES, MONREALE & PALERMO

We depart after breakfast for a guided tour of the Valley of the Temples, a magnificent collection of seven ancient Greek temples from the 6th and 5th centuries BC and Sicily's most enthralling archaeological site. The most well-preserved and striking of them, the Concordia, is arguably the best-preserved temple in the world outside the Hephaistion in Athens.

From here we will head north to Monreale, a historic hill-town just outside Palermo, a picturesque place most famous for the fine mosaics in the town's great Norman cathedral which we will tour and visit. The cathedral and cloisters at Monreale are frequently cited as the island's greatest Norman buildings. The upper part of the cathedral's interior is completely covered in gleaming gold mosaics; more than 6,000 square metres of mosaic.

Continue to Palermo and our hotel for the next 3 nights. The evening is at leisure.

Included meals: Breakfast
Accommodation: Hotel Federico II, Palermo

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DAY 15 - DISCOVERING PALERMO

This morning we will have a guided visit and backstage tour of the famous Teatro Massimo - Sicily's premier opera/concert theatre with its stunning interiors and detailed exterior. It is the biggest in Italy, and one of the largest in Europe, renowned for its excellent acoustics and holds over 1,300 seats. Then we will visit the Palazzo dei Normanni (Royal Palace) and the Cappella Palatina. Home to Sicily's regional parliament, this venerable palace dates back to the 9th century. However, it owes its current look (and name) to a major Norman makeover, during which spectacular mosaics were added to its royal apartments and magnificent chapel, the Cappella Palatina. Visits to the apartments take in the mosaic-lined Sala dei Venti, and Sala di Ruggero II, King Roger's 12th-century bedroom.

The rest of the day and evening is at leisure.

Included meals: Breakfast
Accommodation: Hotel Federico II, Palermo

DAY 16 - PALERMO'S HIDDEN MARKETS

This morning we have a treat in store - a guided visit and tour of one of Palermo's historic open-air markets. A Palermitan street market is a cacophony of sights, sounds and scents and the tradition dates from the 9th century Saracen rule of the island, which explains their striking similarity to Arab souqs. They are a great place to soak up some local atmosphere even if you don't actually buy anything, but you'll have to know where to find them, hidden as they are from the main streets - that's why we recommend you tag along on this tour.

Tonight we will enjoy a Farewell Dinner together in a local restaurant.

Included meals: Breakfast and Dinner
Accommodation: Hotel Federico II, Palermo

DAY 17 - ARRIVEDERCI ITALIA

Sadly, it's time to say goodbye. We have arranged transfers to Palermo airport for your flight home.

Included meals: Breakfast

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WHAT'S INCLUDED

- One way domestic flight: Rome Fiumicino Airpot [FCO] - Catania Fontanarossa Airport [CAT]
- Meet & Gree on arrival at Milan Malpensa Airport
- Accomodation as detailed in the itinerary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- All transfers/touring and excursions in air-conditioned deluxe motor vehicles including necessary ZTL permits.
- All entrances, English-speaking guides and visits as indicated in the programme.
- Porterage at all hotels including luggage assistance for the Venice boat transfers (1 piece per person)
- Tourist taxes
- Services of a Big Journey Company Tour Director throughout

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Flights to arrive into Milan Malpensa Airport [MXP] on Day 1 and depart from Palermo Airport [PMO] on Day 17
- ATOL Protection
- Additional food and beverage unless otherwise included in the itinerary
- Personal expenses
- Personal Travel & Medical Insurance
- Optional excursions/entrances
- Gratuities
- Any COVID tests or related entry & exit requirements

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Please note, flights to/from Italy are not included in this package. The Big Journey Company would be happy to provide a quotation for your flights - please contact us for further details
- Please let The Big Journey Company know prior to travelling if you have any medical needs or take any medication that we need to be made aware of to ensure that you have a safe and pleasant tour.
- Check in is after 2pm and check out is before 11am unless otherwise specified in the itinerary.
- Cancellation 90 – 0 days prior to departure cancellation fee is 100%. It is your responsibility to ensure the correct travel insurance in place to protect you against the need to cancel your holiday. Deposits are non-refundable and final payments are due 14 weeks prior to departure.
- Further terms and conditions apply and will be provided upon request or at the time of booking. The Big Journey Company reserves the right to withdraw any offer prior to accepting a reservation request. This does not affect your statutory rights. This offer is subject to availability and space is limited.

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BOOK YOUR JOURNEY

Choose from the list of dates below

CASH ONLY OPTION	23 MAY - 08 JUN 2024	**FROM £10,439 PER PERSON.**
GOLD, PLATINUM, PREMIER & PREMIER PLUS MEMBERS: APPLY 10439 POINTS PER PERSON AT £0.30 PER POINT LEAVING A CASH REMAINDER OF £7245 PER PERSON	23 MAY - 08 JUN 2024	**FROM £7,245 PER PERSON.**
CASH ONLY OPTION	22 MAY - 07 JUN 2025	**FROM £11,009 PER PERSON.**
GOLD, PLATINUM, PREMIER & PREMIER PLUS MEMBERS: APPLY 11009 POINTS PER PERSON AT £0.30 PER POINT LEAVING A CASH REMAINDER OF £7706 PER PERSON	22 MAY - 07 JUN 2025	**FROM £7,706 PER PERSON.**

Call to Book

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