

Sicily

Pacific Horticulture and Sterling Tours present
Gardens, Culture & Cuisine

April 10/11-21, 2022



ITINERARY

Monday – April 11 » Arrival in Sicily and visit to Monreale

Independent arrivals in Palermo. Check into our hotel, the Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa, located in the city center. The hotel has a sophisticated restaurant, bar, and spa with jacuzzi, sauna, steam room and complimentary Wifi.

Visit to the jewel of the Arab-Norman crown in Sicily: the golden cathedral of Monreale, that is one of the most sumptuous examples of the so-called Arab-Norman style. Built by the Norman king William II, the Church became an important Bishop's site to balance the religious power of the nearby Palermo Cathedral. The magnificence of the golden mosaics, decorating the inside, will leave us astonished.

Dinner at leisure and overnight in Palermo.



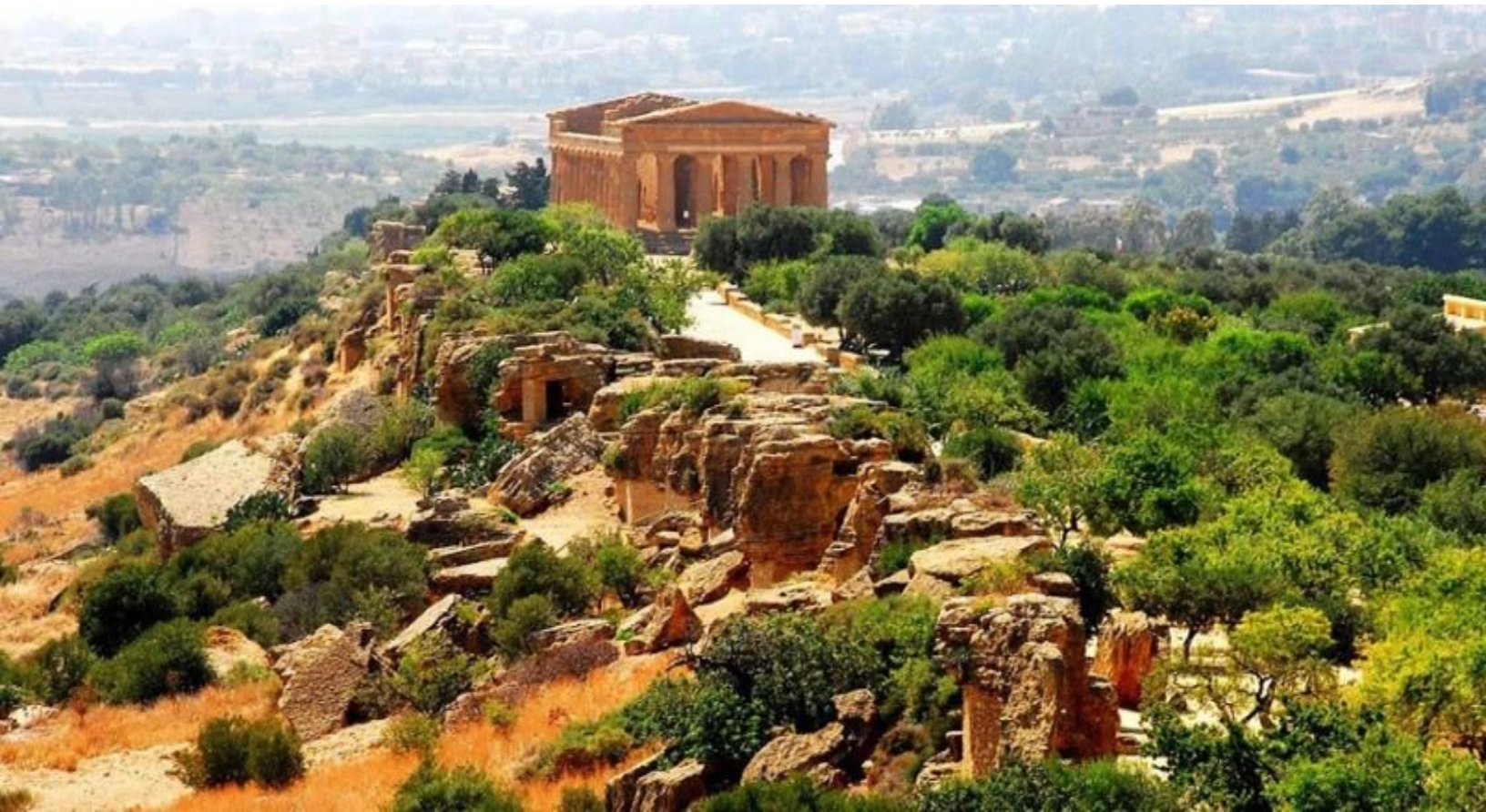
ITINERARY

Tuesday - April. 12» Palermo (UNESCO) and Welcome Dinner at a Noble Palace

Today we will enjoy a tour of Palermo, an exotic city. Palermo is a city rich in history, art, and beauty but also full of exotic and lush plants. During the Arab domination, palm trees were planted in Palermo. In the past centuries, noble families collected and imported exotic plants with the same passion they had for buying artworks. Trees and plants from Africa, Latin America, Australia, and Japan found their home in this city, mingled with monuments and squares, and created a unique urban landscape.

After our light lunch experiencing the world of the street-food, which is included, we will visit Villa Malfitano and its lovely private garden. The Villa was built during the Belle époque age by the Sicilian-English family Whitaker, who had developed the wine industry in Marsala. The garden of the villa was designed by Emilio Kunzmann. We will find many rare plants from Tunisia, Sumatra, Australia, and South America.

Tonight, our welcome dinner is at Villa Tasca, a noble palace in Palermo.



ITINERARY

Wednesday - April 13 » Agrigento: Kolymbetra Garden and Valley of the Temples

This morning we travel to the Agrigento area for a visit to the Garden of Kolymbetra.

The Garden is a shaded corner of paradise, where nature is fused with history. We will visit the garden and the evocative Archaeology Park nearby. We will enjoy a picnic lunch inside the Kolymbetra garden and a guided tour at the Valley of the Temples.

Our accommodations are at the Villa Athena, situated within the Archaeological Park of the Valley of the Temples. The villa, a magnificent residence built in the end of the 18th century, has a spa and free Wifi.

Dinner this evening is included at the hotel.



ITINERARY

Thursday- April 14 » Sant'Angelo Muxaro and San Biagio Platani

After breakfast we visit Sant'Angelo Muxaro, a small village with an ancient history located in the hinterland, near Agrigento, on a lonely hill in the middle of the Platani river valley. The Sant'Angelo Muxaro visit provides an opportunity to "meet the locals". We will walk among the picturesque village lanes with stops for tastings and encounters. We include a dairy stop with tasting of cheeses produced each day by a local family, a bakery stop with a taste of "pani cunzati" (bread with local olive oil and pepper), and almond cookies and honey. The morning ends with a panoramic tour of the natural archaeological area.

We return to the village for a lunch based on local products and dishes.

After lunch we will visit San Biagio Platani: the old tradition of Easter Arches, also known as bread arches, started in 18th century. During the Easter period, two confraternities compete in a lively and passionate demonstration called "Archi di Pasqua".

Dinner this evening is included at the hotel.



ITINERARY

Friday - April 15 » Olive Oil experience and Piazza Armerina (UNESCO)

Today we drive to Piazza Armerina to visit to the impressive structures of the Roman Villa at Casale, which contains the greatest complex of Roman mosaics in the world. This once sumptuous villa, built around AD 286, has public areas, private rooms, baths, and courtyards.

Our next stop is an olive oil mill where we will enjoy a tasting and light lunch.

After lunch we travel to Ragusa, a lovely hill town and UNESCO World Heritage Site, built in the region's rich Baroque style. We will check in to our hotel, the Locanda Don Serafino. The charming rooms are partially carved into the rock in a building from the 19th century. This Relais & Châteaux property has one of the finest restaurants in Sicily.

Dinner at leisure and overnight in Ragusa.



ITINERARY

Saturday – April 16 » Scicli (UNESCO) and Modica (UNESCO) with herb farm experience

After breakfast we travel to Scicli for a walking tour of the historical old town center. The town is an example of the creative genius of the late Baroque age, and the result of the eighteenth-century reconstruction after the 1693 earthquake that destroyed the whole city.

Next, we will visit an herb farm nearby that produces more than 120 different varieties of plants and herbs using traditional methods of manual cultivation. While there we will have a light lunch alfresco using local products.

After lunch we drive to Modica for a hands-on Chocolate experience and a walking tour. A cook will teach us how to make the local chocolate bar and explain its history and tradition.

Dinner included at a local restaurant.



ITINERARY

Sunday- April 17 » Easter

Today we will have a chance to participate in the local Easter parade "A Paci" in Comiso, a small town where the religious tradition has become a spectacular performance. The statues of the Virgin Mary and Jesus are carried through narrow streets and when they arrive in front of each church, two little angels sing the "Regina Coeli" in the middle of an excited crowd of worshippers.

Later we will enjoy a typical Easter lunch.

The rest of the afternoon is at leisure.

Dinner at leisure and overnight in Ragusa.



ITINERARY

Monday - April 18 » Ragusa (UNESCO)

This morning we visit the Castle of Donnafugata which was the Arezzo baron's holiday resort during the 19th century. The castle is surrounded by a large park with over 1500 plant species and various "follies" to entertain guests such as artificial caves with fake stalactites and a labyrinth.

We continue with a visit to a watermill, and we will have lunch consisting of local specialties made with the flours produced in the mill.

After lunch, we return to Ragusa for a guided city tour including a public garden, the result of noblemen's patronage.

Dinner at leisure and overnight in Ragusa.



ITINERARY

Tuesday - April 19 » Siracusa (UNESCO)

This morning we drive to Siracusa, the most important and powerful Greek city around the 5th century BC and according to Cicero, the most beautiful. We will stroll through the ancient city of Ortygia and tour the highlights.

After the tour, we will have free time for lunch.

In the afternoon, we also visit the private garden of the Marchese di San Giuliano in Villasmundo. The San Giuliano Garden, winner of a Great Italian Gardens prize, boasts plants specimens from all over the world. Starting in the 1970s, the Marquis Giuseppe di San Giuliano began to create a garden surrounding an old farmhouse. The garden continues to become more beautiful over time due to the passion and care of the owner.

Later we will transfer to the lovely resort town of Taormina. Our accommodations are at Villa Schuler, a 4-star boutique hotel in the historic center of Taormina.

Dinner is included at a local restaurant.



ITINERARY

Wednesday - April 20 » Taormina

After breakfast we will enjoy a guided tour of Taormina with visits to the highlights, including the Greek-Roman theater and the Public Gardens, originally designed by Lady Florence Trevelyan, a Scottish noblewoman who arrived in Taormina in 1884. We can still admire the "Victorian follies", built for ornamental purposes. The garden has one of the most beautiful panoramas in town.

We will have a festive farewell lunch at Donna Carmela with wine included.

This afternoon we will visit "Vivaio Faro", one of the largest nurseries in Italy, whose greenhouse and field plants provide a large-scale production of over 800 species and more than 5,000 varieties of flowers, exotics, succulents, ornamental plants, trees, aromatic herbs, and citrus trees. The nursery, located at the foot of the Mount Etna, has grown thanks to the passion and commitment of the Faro family.

Dinner at leisure and overnight in Taormina.



Thursday- April 21 » Departure An early morning transfer to Catania is included.

TOUR PRICE: \$6998.00 members \$7098 non-members Single supplement \$1368

INCLUDES:

- 10 night's accommodation, all rooms with private bathrooms
- All hotel taxes and service charges
- Breakfast daily- 8 lunches and 5 dinners as noted in the itinerary
- Deluxe transportation by private motor coach
- Special English-speaking escort and local guides
- All sightseeing and entrances as per the itinerary
- Escorted by Linda McKendry
- Tax-deductible donation of \$350 to Pacific Horticulture

COSTS DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Airfare
- Tips to your guide & driver
- Travel Insurance

**For reservations and further information contact: Sterling Tours, Ltd
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