

MALTA AND SICILY

DETAILED ITINERARY

Aug 21/23



The largest island in the Mediterranean, Sicily's incredible natural wonders, mild climate and rich culture offers an unparalleled feast for the senses. The island beckons travelers with lush mountains, simmering volcanoes, picture perfect seaside villages, and crystal colored waters. Settled by diverse ancient civilizations for over 3,000 years, this history is reflected in its architecture, cuisine, and treasured archaeological sites.

Malta is truly one of Southern Europe's travel gems, boasting an impressive 7,000 years of history. Located in the heart of the Mediterranean, the islands have three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the Baroque city of Valletta, Hal Saflieni Hypogeum, and several prehistoric Megalithic Temples.

Experience the untouched and rugged life on the

FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 days • Maximum 16 travelers • Start in Palermo, Sicily and finish in Valletta, Malta • All meals included
- Explore colorful old towns of Valletta, Catania, and Ortigia • Visit Valley of the Temples and Siracusa archaeological sites • Explore Mt Etna volcano • Full day tour to the island of Gozo • Walking tour of Mdina & Three Cities • Visit Marsaxlokk & Blue Grotto

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

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|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Sep 27 - Oct 10, 2023 | \$6495 USD |
| Apr 24 - May 07, 2024 | \$6595 USD |
| Sep 26 - Oct 09, 2024 | \$6595 USD |

Activity Level: 2-3

Comfort Level: Uneven cobblestone streets and unpaved terrain at archaeological sites.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Comfortable hotels with private bathrooms.

ELDERTREKS



SMALL GROUP
EXOTIC ADVENTURES
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS

islands of Malta, where time seems to stand still. The history, architecture, landscape, and people connect past and present, making Malta a rich cultural and historic destination for all who step foot on this magical Mediterranean nation.

DAY 1 WELCOME TO SICILY

Arrive in Palermo and transfer to the hotel. Tonight we meet as a group for dinner and orientation.

Overnight in Palermo.

DAY 2 WALKING TOUR OF PALERMO

This morning we enjoy a walk through of various local markets and finish our lunch with delicious coffee and gelato at a local cafe.

In the afternoon, we continue with our walking tour of Palermo which highlights the Piazza Verdi, Capo, Piazza S. Domenico, Quattro Canti, Piazza Pretoria, Piazza Bellini, Cappella Palatina Ballaro, and the Cathedral. We end the day with a visit to the archaeological museum or the Oratorio.

Dinner and overnight in Palermo.

DAY 3 MONREALE CATHEDRAL, CEFALU

This morning we visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Monreale Cathedral, considered one of the most beautiful examples of Norman architecture in Sicily. Taking only three short years for the work to be completed, the Cathedral houses over 68,000 square feet (6,000 square meters) of tiny golden mosaics, virtually covering the entire interior.

After lunch, we visit the historic and picturesque seaside town of Cefalu, where we explore the charming squares, streets and churches (many of which are featured in the film Cinema Paradiso).

Dinner and overnight in Palermo.





DAY 4 ERICE, SELINUNTE, AND AGRIGENTO

Today we visit the charming medieval hill town of Erice, which is crowned by a castle, surrounded by defensive town walls, and offers sweeping views of the coastline.

This afternoon, we explore the Greek archaeological area of Selinunte, a huge park incorporating Greek temples, ancient town walls, and countryside paths. Enjoy dinner in Agrigento, that boasts stunning views of the Valley of the Temples, one of the most outstanding examples of Greek art and architecture.

Dinner and overnight in Agrigento.

DAY 5 AGRIGENTO AND SIRACUSA

This morning, we have a guided tour of the Valley of the Temples. This splendid archaeological park consists of eight temples built between 510 BC and 430 BC. We have a picnic lunch in the Arabic garden of the Kolymbetra, which is part of the Italian

Heritage Protected Sites.

After lunch, we depart for Siracusa for our guided tour of the archaeological area that includes the Greek theater, Roman Amphitheater, Latomie, and Orecchio di Dionisio.

Dinner and overnight in Siracusa.

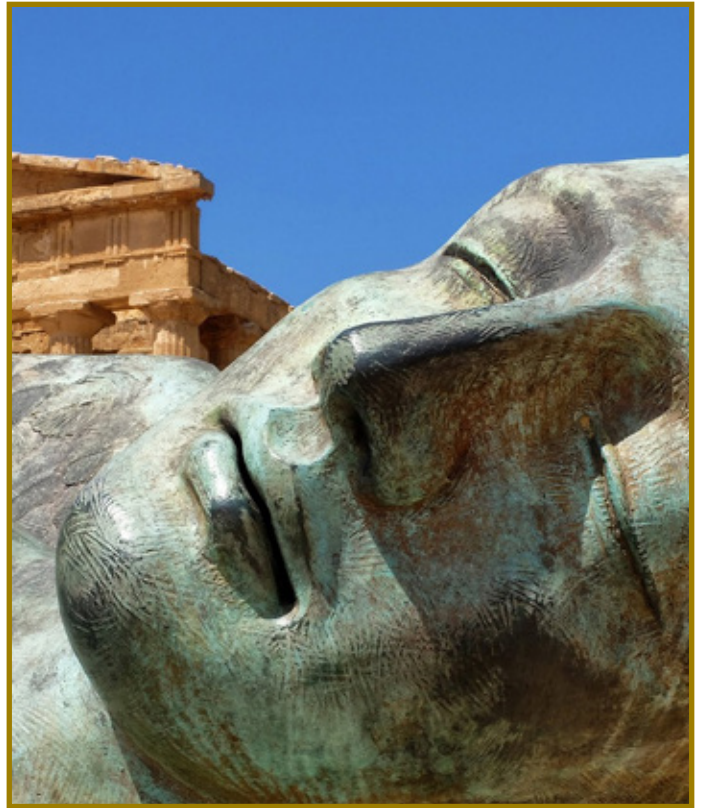
DAY 6 ORTIGIA AND CATANIA

This morning we enjoy a guided walking tour of Ortigia, the old city center of Siracusa known for its narrow medieval lanes and Baroque palaces and churches.

After lunch we make our way to Catania. Founded in 1434 and noted for its history, culture and Baroque style architecture, we have a guided walking tour of the city.

Dinner and overnight in Catania.





DAY 7 MT ETNA, WINE TASTING AND TAORMINA

We begin today with a guided tour of Mt Etna, the highest active volcano in Europe, currently standing at 10,922 ft (3,329m) high. Its fertile volcanic soils support nearby agriculture, vineyards, and orchards. It became a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2013.

We enjoy wine tasting and lunch in one of the wineries on the slopes of Mt Etna before traveling to the picturesque hilltop town of Taormina. We will visit the Teatro Antico di Taormina, an ancient Greco-Roman theater still used today. We will enjoy some free time here before traveling back to Catania.

Dinner and overnight in Catania.

DAY 8 SCICLI, MODICA, AND TRANSFER TO MALTA

This morning, we will have a city tour of Scicli, a UNESCO listed Baroque town, situated in a basin between several hills with overhanging churches and monasteries on high peaks. Afterwards we travel to the tiny town of Modica, which is home to one of the best chocolate companies in

Italy. During our visit, we will be able to sample the famed chocolate. Later, we will make our way to the port for our hydrofoil crossing to Malta.

Overnight in Sliema.

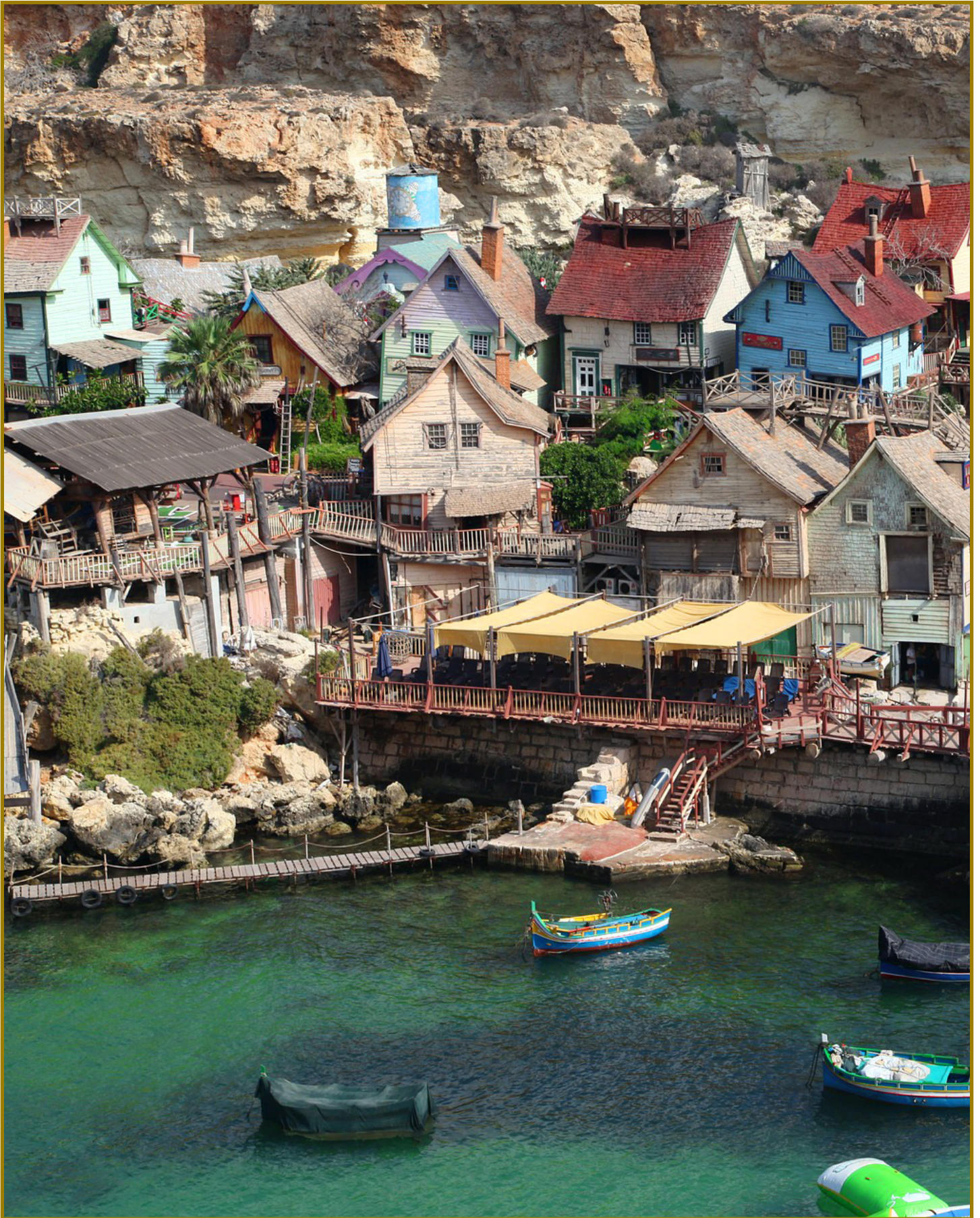
DAY 9 VALLETTA, THREE CITIES

For our first day in Malta, we begin with a guided tour of Valletta, the Maltese capital, which is also a designated UNESCO Heritage Site. One of our stops is St. John's Co-Cathedral, dedicated to Saint John the Baptist and built by the Order of St. John between 1572 and 1577. We then enjoy a short film called "The Malta Experience" which gives a good overview of Malta's 7,000 year old history.

After lunch, we travel across the harbor in a traditional boat called dghajsa to the Three Cities (Vittoriosa, Cospicua, and Senglea) to visit the Inquisitor's Palace, originally built in the 16th century as a courthouse and later used as the inquisitor's residence. It now serves as the National Museum of Ethnography.

Dinner and overnight in Sliema.





DAY 10 HAGAR QIM, MARSAXLOKK, BLUE GROTTO

This morning, we visit Hagar Qim, a megalithic temple complex dating from the Ggantija phase (3600-3200 BC). The temples, considered “unique architectural masterpieces” are among the most ancient religious sites in the world. We then make our way to the picturesque fisherman’s village of Marsaxlokk, with its colorful fishing boats, tranquil harbor, and daily open air market. We will have lunch in a typical fish restaurant and later visit the Ghar Dalam Caves complex, a very important site for archaeology, palaeontology, and ecology.

Making our way along the coastline, we enjoy breathtaking views, overlooking the sea and cliffs of the Blue Grotto. A cathedral in stone, with nature as its architect, the Blue Grotto is an immense cave

adorned with deep blue waters inside, after which it takes its name. Given good weather conditions, a boat ride inside these mesmerizing caves is a must. We will visit the Blue Grotto by small boats. (*Pending favourable weather conditions)

Overnight in Sliema.

DAY 11 MOSTA, MDINA, TO RABAT

We begin today with a guided tour of Mosta Dome, one of the oldest churches in Europe, built by a Maltese architect and modelled after the Pantheon in Rome. We enjoy a walking tour of Mdina, an ancient walled city also known as the Silent City, as it is lit by candlelight each evening.

After lunch, we visit Rabat, which served as a shelter



from pirate attacks during the 15th century. We explore the well-known Catacombs of St. Paul, used during Roman times to bury the dead. We take a short trip to the majestic Dingli Cliffs to admire breathtaking views over the open seas, as well as of Malta.

Dinner and overnight in Sliema.

DAY 12 GOZO TOUR

Today we travel by ferry to the island of Gozo. We enjoy a tour of the island in 4x4 jeeps stopping at Ggantija Temples, Inland Sea, and Ramla Bay.

We stop at a local farmhouse where we enjoy a light lunch with local specialties.

After lunch, we have a walking tour of Victoria with its narrow winding streets, markets and shops, a charming place to spend the afternoon. We will also make a stop at the Citadella of Gozo before we make our way back to the harbor for our return ferry to Malta.

Overnight in Sliema.



DAY 13 HAL SAFLIENI HYPOGEUM

The Hal Saflieni Hypogeum is an underground prehistoric burial site discovered in 1902 during construction work. It is a complex made up of inter-connecting rock-cut chambers set on three distinct levels. Earliest remains at the site date back to about 4000 BC, and the complex was used over a span of many centuries, up to c. 2500 BC.

After lunch, we visit the archaeological museum in Valletta and then have some free time before our farewell dinner in the evening.

Dinner and overnight in Sliema.

DAY 14 DEPART VALLETTA

We bid a fond farewell to Sicily and Malta today as we head for the airport and our flight home.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (porterage), national guide, bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visas and travel insurance.

4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit museums, national parks and reserves and have talks and discussions on many aspects of history, culture and nature. But this is only a portion of the educational experience. We believe that it is equally educational to meet local people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes and even try to learn a few words in the native language. Sometimes the most “educational” moments are wandering through the streets of a mountain village.

5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

All local transportation is included in the land price of the trip. We travel in micro or mini buses, by boat and on foot.

6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

We stay in good accommodations that range from mountain-view lodges and small hotels to larger city-based hotels. All nights have private bathrooms.

7. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

In April, Malta and Sicily can reach highs in the mid 70's (around 22/23 C) and night time lows can hit 10 °C (50°F). In September, average high temperatures can reach 83 F (28 C). We avoid the rainiest months from November - January.

8. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 USD (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full land cost is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure.

9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is mandatory for this adventure. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.

**Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit*

10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

11. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local foods prepared in a wide range of settings; many served open-air picnic style. Malta and Sicily are known for their food and drinks and there will be ample opportunity to sample the specialties throughout the adventure.

12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over en route, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the adventure, please call our office for more details. A Trip Specialist will be happy to answer your questions. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.

