

SICILY TRIP



1st Day: Flight to Catania airport (e.g., direct flight Amsterdam – Catania with EasyJet).

Visit to the city of **Catania**, the second largest city of Sicily called the daughter of Etna. The city was destroyed by lava during the eruption of Etna in 1669. The buildings were entirely rebuilt in lava stone and Syracuse limestone. The contrast between white and black dominates throughout the city, but **Piazza Duomo** [<https://goo.gl/maps/QEP6dxVsQoMdrkF67>] is perhaps the best example. Do not miss the **Pescheria** [<https://goo.gl/maps/mUdoov3Vi277B4si7>], historic fish market (adjacent to Piazza Duomo and open only in the morning). **Via Etnea**, **Piazza Università**, **Villa Bellini**, the **Massimo Theater**, **Castello Ursino** and the **Roman Amphitheater** complete the list of things to see in Catania (in one day only!) [here is an example of walking tour <https://goo.gl/maps/xydRGEF3Tk9nCcMX6>]. Typical products are the **minne of Sant'Agata**, **arancini** and **rotisserie** of all kinds [here is a very famous patisserie https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g187888-d2336237-r682764955-Pasticceria_Savia-Catania_Province_of_Catania_Sicily.html]. **Via Santa Filomena** [<https://goo.gl/maps/TMyMBoJgzXkbTYJr8>] with all its small restaurants could be an interesting destination for dinner. **Street Food** is recommended during the day!

SUGGESTIONS:

- I never had any issue in Catania. However, bear in mind that there could be pickpockets especially in the area close to the central station.
- I suggest to rent a car because public transportation in Sicily is not efficient. However, please consider that traffic in Catania is crazy. If you rent a car in the airport area when you arrive in Sicily, I suggest to drive to the city center, park the car in a convenient location and then walk through the center to see the main attractions.

2nd Day: Catania – Siracusa – Noto

Departure for **Syracuse**, founded by Greeks in the 8th century BC. Inside the **Neapolis** (Archaeological Park of the City) there is the **largest Greek theater in Sicily** [<https://goo.gl/maps/Z47LdY1XwPBEyJjU7>]. Built in the 5th century BC, still hosts classic performances every year. Noteworthy is also the **Ear of Dionysius** and the **altar of Hieron**. After visiting the park it is mandatory to move to the heart of the city, especially on the island of **Ortigia** [<https://goo.gl/maps/8anuQRvUqoWjjiMX9>], where the founders of the city found refreshment by drinking from the legendary **Aretusa spring** [<https://goo.gl/maps/wZWWoZbWghoQrZx59>], a source of fresh water just a few steps from the sea. The **Piazza Duomo** [<https://goo.gl/maps/CxULsggrUkoygSer6>] of Syracuse is the most beautiful square in Sicily. The **Duomo** is a unique architectural example in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site [<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1200>]. Walking and getting lost in the alleys of Ortigia is the only way to fully appreciate the beauty of the city. After an excellent fish-based lunch (Osteria Il Pesce Azzurro, via Cavour 53, is highly recommended) [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant_Review-g187891-d12946570-Reviews-Il_Pesce_Azzurro_Osteria-Syracuse_Province_of_Syracuse_Sicily.html] move to **Noto**, the capital of the Sicilian Baroque, a UNESCO World Heritage Site [<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1024/>]. **Corso Vittorio Emanuele** [<https://goo.gl/maps/pVMLVkgKQax8SCaP8>] is a succession of baroque buildings of rare beauty, as well as **via Nicolaci** [<https://goo.gl/maps/r9vj5MD6BrsvL6ae8>].

For a quality dinner I recommend the Gastro Matto restaurant in Vico Barone Astuto [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant_Review-g652022-d17660363-Reviews-Gastro_Matto-Noto_Province_of_Syracuse_Sicily.html].

I also recommend Caffè Sicilia [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant_Review-g652022-d1139598-Reviews-Caffe_Sicilia-Noto_Province_of_Syracuse_Sicily.html] ice cream and granita as well as the mandorla pizzuta of Avola [<https://www.italymagazine.com/news/almond-perfection-mandorla-di-noto>]. Overnight stay in Noto.

SUGGESTIONS:

- I recommend to make a reservation in the restaurants if you plan to go there in the weekend, otherwise it should not be a problem to find a table for two.

3rd Day: Noto – Marzamemi – Vendicari - Scicli – Modica

Departure to discover the “baroque triangle”. Before arriving in **Scicli**, a small town in the province of **Ragusa** that became famous because of the fiction of “Commissario Montalbano” [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inspector_Montalbano_\(TV_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inspector_Montalbano_(TV_series))]. I recommend to stop in **Marzamemi** (only half an hour's drive from Noto), a small fishing village. If you love nature, you must see the **Vendicari** reserve [<https://goo.gl/maps/ogLzgvUusb2iiBRJA7>] and then continue towards **Modica**, the city of chocolate. I recommend to stop by the Bonajuto confectionery [<https://g.page/bonajuto?share>] where you can find great sweet ricotta cannoli and chocolate for all tastes.

I suggest to have dinner at Accursio Craparo, Michelin star restaurant [<http://www.accursioristorante.it/en/>]. Overnight stay in Modica.

SUGGESTIONS:

- I strongly recommend to make a reservation if you plan to have dinner at Accursio Craparo.
- Bear in mind that the chocolate of Modica has a very aromatic flavour, completely different than many other types of chocolate [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cioccolato_di_Modica]. It is unique but not everyone likes this chocolate (myself included!).

4th Day: Modica – Ragusa – Agrigento - Menfi

Departure for Ragusa, visit of **Ibla** [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g194872-d2343947-Reviews-Ragusa_Ibla-Ragusa_Province_of_Ragusa_Sicily.html], historical center of the city. Typical products are different types of cheese. Quick lunch in Ragusa and continue towards **Agrigento**. Visit of the **Valley of the Temples** [<https://goo.gl/maps/SRgifipNipXpkRsv6>] and overnight stay in **Menfi**. I recommend to stay and have dinner at the Foresteria di Planeta [<https://goo.gl/maps/SxeYQ55PTZEGrnt66>].

5th Day: Menfi - Marsala – Erice – Palermo

Move to **Marsala**, where I recommend to visit the salt pans [<https://goo.gl/maps/CTGVjWW4BE5XfXy99>]. In addition to visiting the salt pans, you can enter the tanks and enjoy a nice experience (reservations required). The sunset over the salt marshes is magic. It is highly recommended to stay until sunset in Marsala (the Stagnone reserve is also beautiful [<https://goo.gl/maps/J39uNhJooqR3t7ki6>]) and after sunset move to **Trapani** for the night and leave for Palermo the next day. Also the visit to the Cantine Florio [<https://www.duca.it/en/florio/ospitalita/>], a historical winery which offers guided tours and tasting programme, is recommended (reservations required). Do not miss in any case **Erice**, located at 750 meters above sea level. The medieval atmosphere, the fresh air, the beautiful pine forests that surround it, the panorama, the tranquility and the local craftsmanship make Erice one of the must-see destinations in western Sicily. Do not miss the desserts of Maria Grammatico (confectionery on the main road

leading to the castle of Venus) [<https://goo.gl/maps/DT6ETxBT82KNiiVj9>]. Continue to Palermo and overnight stay there. For accommodation I suggest B&B Quattro Canti [<https://goo.gl/maps/GR7Rg7nGTXSkipDQ9>].

SUGGESTIONS:

- If you have time, you could also visit Cefalù and Piazza Armerina. However, if you do not have time (there are many other things to do and see), I think you could skip them now and go there later (see Day 7).

6th Day: Palermo

Palermo is a city with one of the largest historical center in Europe and it would be worth staying a few more days to be able to discover the great variety of monuments and fascinating places that it hosts and offers. In one day it is still possible to do a nice tour that will allow you to know and admire its most significant places. Do not miss the famous **Palatine Chapel** [<https://goo.gl/maps/e8dZkkw1Xh3CyjmUA>], inside the **Norman Palace**, now the headquarters of the Sicilian Regional Assembly. From there you can reach the **Cassaro**, the oldest road artery in the city, **Porta Nuova**, the **Cathedral**, the **Quattro Canti**, **Piazza Pretoria**, the church of the **Martorana**, **Piazza Marina** up to the **Foro Italico** and the **Cala** [here is an example of walking tour <https://goo.gl/maps/LsJyPFTb9vkRfWHn8>]. For the Art Nouveau of Palermo, you must instead go to **Via Maqueda** [<https://goo.gl/maps/SZ4z6u9fGx8Q6aST6>], where you can find the symbols of the city, the **Politeama Theater** [<https://goo.gl/maps/MMJDXAcBHXpGMZCF7>] and the **Massimo Theater** [<https://goo.gl/maps/Keg1PSRS3WLDUxbH7>]. It is also recommended to take the chance to walk through one of the historic markets of the city: **Capo** [<https://goo.gl/maps/qW8r13Tjk94sNihUA>], **Ballarò** [<https://goo.gl/maps/ftnZskMiL1CBwy8w5>] and **Vucciria** [<https://goo.gl/maps/kKjRePqFnGFe4sy38>] offer an unmissable insight into Palermo, an exceptional mix of colours, scents, flavours and voices. Great place to enjoy Palermo street food "Pane e panelle", "pane ca'meusa", etc)!. In Palermo, do not miss the pasta with sardines [<http://www.visitsicily.info/en/pasta-with-sardines/>]!

7th Day: Monreale – Cefalù – Piazza Armerina – Catania

(If you preferred the sunset in a Marsala: Palermo – Cefalù – Catania)

Just 10 km from Palermo is **Monreale**. The town and the **Cathedral** [<https://goo.gl/maps/HF5eyaLjqhD7zVd4A>] cannot be missed. Monreale Cathedral is known worldwide for its mosaics: an area of over 6,000 square meters declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2015 [<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1487/>]. Afterwards, departure for **Cefalù**. The village is around the **Duomo** [<https://goo.gl/maps/AoP8R56o6HxuW7d8A>], an imposing fortress built by Roger II. Over the centuries the city has preserved its ancient medieval aspect characterized by the narrow streets of the historic center. The seaside village is particularly characteristic, with the old houses facing the sea. Do not miss the **Arab wash house** [<https://goo.gl/maps/sE8PELHv5w6BoWCc8>]. From Cefalù you can decide to cross the heart of Sicily to reach **Piazza Armerina**, an ancient medieval town, made

famous by the proximity of the **Villa Romana del Casale** [<https://goo.gl/maps/mHkCNfeSEg4ZYMGJ8>]. The Villa has been part of the Unesco Heritage since 1997 [<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/832/>]. The flooring is entirely covered with mosaics depicting scenes of everyday life, hunting, fishing, prayer, games and mythological scenes. After the visit of the Villa del Casale, continue towards Catania for the overnight stay.

If you don't want to visit the Villa Romana del Casale from Cefalù, you can continue towards the **Sanctuary of the Madonna di Tindari** [<https://goo.gl/maps/tMV4je65TnS9sM2T9>] and then stop in **Taormina** for the night (Taormina is very close to my village, so I can provide many other recommendations!).

8th Day^o Giorno: Etna – Riviera dei Ciclopi (Acitrezza, Acicastello)

Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe, 3345 meters with a diameter of over 40 km, occupies an area of approximately 1260 square km. Absolutely recommended the ascent up to 3000 meters from the Etna Sud slope [<http://www.visitsicily.info/en/il-monte-etna-2/>] with cable car and 4x4 Jeep (which has become increasingly expensive but it's worth it!).

The whole territory of Etna, thanks to the richness of the volcanic soil, is a territory rich in excellence: honey, fruit, vegetables, wines. Visiting a cellar on Etna would be ideal (Cottanera, Benanti, Murgo, Tenuta delle Terre Nere, Sciaranuova). If you go down towards the coast, the Cantina Murgo is just passing through Santa Venerina [<https://goo.gl/maps/3KxnYUF2hn7aWict5>] and the lunch is excellent (make a reservation in advance!). After lunch, return to Catania with a stop at the Cyclops Riviera [<https://goo.gl/maps/H5hjgyhAbrZPrbyn9>]. Enjoy cocktails and appetizers at Sicilia's [<https://goo.gl/maps/UTyii4S675CY15416>] in Aci Trezza in front of the **Faraglioni** [<https://goo.gl/maps/T4STdbvUhw9NdtFi7>] and wait for the sunset. Return to Catania and overnight stay.

9th Day: Taormina - Gole Alcantara

Visit **Taormina**, the pearl of the Ionian Sea. Do not miss a visit to the **Greek-Roman Theater** [<https://goo.gl/maps/E6RW7iXzShBZpU477>] of Taormina. A walk on the **Corso Umberto of Taormina** [<https://goo.gl/maps/Q72GHf6inWSgggEA6>] and granita at the **Bam Bar** [<https://goo.gl/maps/UiFHAGzaydwEN5v39>] is mandatory. On the way back, take a selfie on Isola Bella [<https://goo.gl/maps/p1PbTTuCH9xzfstZ7>].

In the afternoon, before returning to Catania, you can stop at the Alcantara Gorges [<https://goo.gl/maps/b8LBzVvVn1eWsbGz6>], an incredible place that seems to belong to another planet. I need to verify that this place is open on April.

Return to Catania.

10th Day: Departure from Catania