



THE NATIONAL ITALIAN AMERICAN FOUNDATION
 2017 AMBASSADOR PETER F. SECCHIA VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY
 SICILY, ITALY
 JUNE 7, 2017 – JUNE 23, 2017
 ITINERARY

Wednesday, June 7 – Departure

Flight AZ 609: Depart New York, New York (JFK) at 4:25 p.m. with arrival in Rome, Italy (FCO) at 6:50 a.m., June 8, 2017

Thursday, June 8 – Arrival in Rome

Flight AZ 1709: Depart Rome, Italy (FCO) at 8:20 a.m. with arrival in Catania, Sicily (CTA) at 9:35 a.m.

Thursday, June 8 – Arrival in Catania

9:35 a.m. Arrival at the Catania–Fontanarossa Airport. After we pick up our bags at baggage claim and board our private motorcoach we will make our way to our hotel passing through the “Cyclops Riviera” or the “Riviera dei Ciclopi” (Acicastello, Acitrezza and Acireale). We will stop to have a bite to eat in Acireale before heading to our hotel in the seaside town of Mascali.

The riviera is a picturesque stretch of coast that stretches for about 10 kilometers, encompassing the fishing villages of Acicastello, Acitrezza and Acireale. The cost takes its name according to Homer’s epic “The Odyssey”. The legend has it that it was created when the blinded Cyclops, Polyphemus, threw enormous rocks at the retreating Ulysses, creating spectacular rock pillars known as “Faraglioni”. But there’s another legend tied to this unique coast—the story of unreciprocated love between Polyphemus and the sea-nymph Galatea. Galatea was instead in love with the shepherd, Aci. Crazy with jealousy, Polyphemus killed Aci by throwing a rock at him. Which rolled down into the sea and formed “Lachea Island”—one of the large rock pillars. But in turn, Galatea turned Aci into a river as immortal as herself to be with him forever.

Atlantis Palace Hotel

Via Spiaggia in Sant’Anna, 257

95016 Mascali (CT)

Italy

Tel: +39.095.782.8947

<http://www.hotelatlantis.it/en/>

Once we arrive at the hotel, we’ll check into our rooms. You will have the rest of the day to rest.

Dinner in the hotel.

Friday, June 9 – Taormina

Breakfast is served daily from 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

10:30 a.m. Departure for Taormina (*transfer by private motorcoach*)

11:30 a.m. We will meet with our local guide and have a walking tour of Taormina and the Greco-Roman Theater.

Taormina is a hilltop town on the east coast of Sicily. Located in the province of Messina, it sits at 200 meters above sea level. The town is known for the Teatro Antico di Taormina, an ancient Greco--Roman theater still used today.

Lunch on your own and free time to shop and explore the town.

3:45 p.m. We will meet in the main piazza in front of the Cathedral of San Giuseppe and walk to “Da Cristina” to learn how to make the typical Sicilian street food, arancini.

7:00 p.m. Dinner at “**Ristorante Terrazza Angelo**” (Taormina)

After dinner we will return to the hotel.

Saturday, June 10 – Mount Etna

Breakfast is served daily from 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

****Wear warm, comfortable clothes and closed-toe tennis shoes or hiking/walking shoes. No sandals. Dress in layers with water proof outer shell. Remember, Mount Etna is the tallest volcano in Europe so it will be much cooler and windier at the summit.****

9:30 a.m. Departure for Mount Etna. (*transfer by private motorcoach*)

We will arrive by bus to the “Crateri Silvestri” or Sylvester Craters at 1,900 meters (6,234 feet). We won’t hike all the way up to the summit.

Mount Etna is an active stratovolcano on the east coast of Sicily between the cities of Messina and Catania. It is the tallest active volcano in Europe at 10,922 feet above sea level which makes it two and half times taller than Mount Vesuvius. It is also one of the most active in the world and is in an almost constant state of activity. In 2013 it was added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

2:30 p.m. After our excursion on Mt. Etna, we will head to “**Cantine Barone di Villagrande,**” where we will tour the vineyard on the slopes of the volcano and have a buffet lunch of local Sicilian specialties. (*transfer by private motorcoach*)

The vineyard, located at 2,297 feet above sea level, has been in the Nicolosi family since 1727.

After lunch we will head back to Mascali. Dinner in the hotel. **Be sure to pack your bags for our departure in the morning for our next hotel in Ragusa.**

Sunday, June 11 – Catania—Ragusa

Breakfast is served daily from 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Be packed up and ready to check out.

8:30 a.m. Departure for Aci Sant’ Antonio to visit the Sicilian Cart Museum. (*transfer by private motorcoach*)

One of the best-known symbols of Sicilian folk iconography, is the Sicilian Cart or “Carretto Siciliano.” The cart was created as a means of transport that responded to practical needs, but went on to be transformed into a vehicle for cultural transmission.

11:30 a.m. After our visit to the museum, we will head to Catania.

12:30 p.m. Lunch at **“Ristorante Trattoria del Cavaliere di Catania”**

2:00 p.m. Walking tour of Catania with our local guide.

Catania is one of the ten biggest cities in Italy. It was subjected to the power of its various occupants (Greeks and Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Angevins, Spanish, etc.) and its history was marked in a succession of disasters including being completely destroyed by catastrophic earthquakes in 1169 and 1693, a violent eruption of Mt. Etna in 1669, it was decimated by the plague in 1423 and 1576 and massively bombed in 1943. The main interest of the city today lies in the omnipresence of the baroque style in which it was rebuilt after the 1693 earthquake and that can be admired above all along the Via Crociferi.

After our tour we will make our way to Ragusa. (*2 hour trip—transfer by private motorcoach*)

Once we arrive in Ragusa, you’ll have time to relax and even explore the town if you wish.

Mediterraneo Palace Hotel

Via Roma, 189

97100 Ragusa

Italy

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<http://www.mediterraneopalace.it/en/>

Dinner in the hotel.

Monday, June 12 – Ragusa—Modica

Breakfast is served daily from 7 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

8:30 a.m. We will meet with our local guide for a walking tour of Ragusa.

Ragusa also has a wide array of fabulous baroque architecture, including shimmering palaces and churches. Following the tragic earthquakes of 1693, the rich families decided to rebuild the city as it was and as quickly as possible. The result was surprising and reflects the rivalries that drove the various noble families to out due one another.

11:00 a.m. Tasting of local artisanal cheeses at **“L’Isola nell’Isola”**.

After our cheese tasting we will depart for Modica. (*transfer by private motorcoach*)

1:00 p.m. Lunch at “**Osteria dei Sapori Perduti**”

After lunch we will have a walking tour of Modica with our guide.

Modica is an attractive historic town in southeastern Sicily, one of the area's UNESCO-listed Baroque towns. Modica is particularly famous for its chocolate, and it is an appealing destination for food-lovers. Modica is situated in the dramatic landscape of the Monti Iblei, a range of high ground divided up by deep valleys and surprisingly populous towns. Important in Medieval times, Modica was rebuilt after the great earthquake of 1693 and now boasts fine late-Baroque architecture as well as a medieval old town.

As you will learn on the tour, Modica is very famous for its chocolate production. We will visit the artisanal chocolate factory “Antica Dolceria Bonajuto” for a chocolate tasting.

With more than 150 years of activity, the Dolceria Bonajuto is the oldest chocolate factory in Sicily that is still in production phase, and one of the oldest in Italy. It is still family owned today.

After the chocolate tasting we will return to Ragusa. Dinner at “**U’ Saracinu**”.

Tuesday, June 13 – Siracusa—Noto

Breakfast is served daily from 7 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

8:30 a.m. Departure for Siracusa. (*transfer by private motorcoach*)

10:00 a.m. Arrival in Siracusa. We will meet our local guide and set off for a walking tour of Siracusa. *In ancient times Siracusa was the most important city in Sicily. It is also the birthplace of the scientist and mathematician Archimedes,. In the northern districts of the city, the archaeological area includes several important remains of this period, especially the vast and magnificent Greek Theatre. The hotspot in Siracusa has always been the island of Ortigia, where one can stroll amidst ancient palaces and Baroque churches.*

Lunch at “**Syraka**”

After lunch we will head to Noto. (*transfer by private motorcoach*)

Walking tour of Noto.

Located on the slope of a hill facing the sea, Noto, is a masterpiece of Sicilian baroque architecture. Noto is famous for its buildings of the early 18th century. The limestone utilized there gives it its golden luminescent quality. The present city follows a very regular orthogonoal design. The central axis is designed to showcase the magnificent cathedral, which stands atop of a flight of steps, where the city council is housed at the foot. The urban fabric of Noto is studded with many other churches (more than 20). Even today it is known for its checkerboard structure of the city, consisting of calibrated islets.

After our tour or Noto, we will head back to Ragusa. Dinner in the hotel.

Wednesday, June 14 – FREE DAY

Breakfast is served daily from 7 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, June 15 – Caltagirone—Piazza Armerina

Breakfast is served daily from 7 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

8:00 a.m. Departure for Caltagirone. *(transfer by private motorcoach)*

Our first stop is the ceramic factory “Ceramiche Cear”. We will tour the factory and witness the ceramic-making techniques.

After the factory tour we will make our way to the city center of Caltagirone.

The city's name derives from the Arabic "qal'at-al-jarar" ("Castle of [pottery] jars") - a name that attests to the antiquity of the pottery works which are still thriving—especially maiolica and terra cotta wares. Virtually all buildings in the old town are decorated with ceramic tiles. The highlight is undoubtedly the 142 steps of the Scalinata di Santa Maria del Monte that connect the lower town with the older upper town that we will of course visit.

We will then depart for Piazza Armerina and have lunch at “**Ristorante Primavera**”. *(transfer by private motorcoach)*

After lunch we will visit the Villa Romana del Casale with a local guide.

Piazza Armerina is a pretty and historic town nestled within the heart of Sicily. It is most famous for the truly astonishing classical mosaics of the Villa Romana del Casale, which is a Roman villa urbana built in the first quarter of the 4th century and located about 3 km outside the town. It contains the richest, largest and most complex collection of Roman mosaics in the world, and has been designated as one of 49 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Italy.

After our visit we will return to Ragusa. Dinner in the hotel. **Be sure to pack your bags for our departure in the morning for our next hotel in Palermo.**

Friday, June 16 – Agrigento—Castelvetrano—Palermo

Breakfast is served daily from 7 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Be packed up and ready to check out.

8:00 a.m. Departure for Agrigento. Bus ride: 3 hrs. approx. *(transfer by private motorcoach)*

Agrigento is a hilltop city on Sicily's southwest shore. Agrigento used to be the Greek city of Akragas, a colony of settlers mainly from Rhodes and Crete. The city, supposedly founded in 582 BC, soon became prosperous and, in its glory days, was one of the most important and most culturally-advanced Greek cities in the Mediterranean.

Once we arrive in Agrigento, we will meet with our local guide for a tour of the Valley of the Temples.

One of Sicily's most famous historical attractions is without a doubt the Valley of the Temples, just outside Agrigento. This splendid archaeological park consists of eight temples (and various other remains) built between about 510 BC and 430 BC: the Temple of Hera, the Temple of Concordia, the Temple of Heracles, the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the Temple of Castor and Pollux, the Temple of Hephaestos, the Temple of Demeter, and the Temple of Asclepius (the God of Medicine). Apart from this latter, which is to be found on the banks of the Akragas river, all are situated in the same area on rocky crests south of modern day Agrigento (not really in a Valley at all!).

Lunch at “**Pasticceria Promenade**”

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After lunch we will depart for Palermo. On the way we will stop in Castelvetro to visit an olive grove, for olive oil and “black bread” tasting at the agriturismo, “**Le Case di Latomie**”.

Castelvetro is famous for its olives (named Castelvetro), olive oil and “black bread”. The black bread of Castelvetro is an ancient tradition of bread produced in Castelvetro, area of Trapani. This is done using the ancient system of working, with yeast called “lu criscenti”, and add a mixture of two groats, that of blond Sicilian wheat and that obtained from a rare local varieties of durum wheat, the wheat of tumminia or marzuolo. It comes in the form of a round loaf (vastedda) and is black in color.

After, we will head to Palermo. Dinner in the hotel in Palermo.

Hotel Europa Palermo

Via Agrigento, 3

90141 Palermo

Italy

+39.091.6323

<http://www.hoteleuropapalermo.it/english/>

Saturday, June 17 – Palermo

Breakfast is served daily from 7 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

9:00 a.m. We will meet our local guide for a walking tour of Palermo, divided up into two sections. The first half of the day will be the Norman-Arab tour, while the second half of the day will be dedicated to the Baroque period.

Palermo is the capital of Sicily located in the northwest of the island. It is at the heart of the Mediterranean and has been a crossroads between cultures for centuries and continues to do so today. The city is known for its history, culture, architecture and gastronomy, playing an important role throughout much of its existence; it is over 2,700 years old. The city was founded in 734 BC by the Phoenicians as Ziz ('flower'). Palermo then became a possession of Carthage, before becoming part of the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire and eventually part of the Byzantine Empire, for over a thousand years. The Greeks named the city Panormus meaning 'complete port'. From 831 to 1072 the city was under Arab rule during the Emirate of Sicily when the city first became a capital. The Arabs shifted the Greek name into Balarme, the root for Palermo's present-day name. Following the Norman reconquest, Palermo became the capital of a new kingdom (from 1130 to 1816), the Kingdom of Sicily and the capital of the Holy Roman Empire under Frederick II Holy Roman Emperor and Conrad IV of Germany, King of the Romans. Eventually Sicily would be united with the Kingdom of Naples to form the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies until the Italian unification of 1861.

Lunch with street food.

The best way to step inside Sicilian and Palermitan culture is through its Street Food! A cheap, authentic, and original way to experience the food culture of Palermo. Typical street food items are arancini (fried rice balls stuffed with meat sauce and cheese), crochè, (fried potato balls), panelle (chick pea fritters) and cardoni (stalks of cardoon aka artichoke thistle). And of course Sicilian pizza also known as sfincione.

After lunch we will explore the Baroque period of Palermo. After, we'll head back to our hotel.

5:30 p.m. Departure for the marionette show. (transfer by walking)

6:30 p.m. Opera dei Pupi at “**Figli D'Arte Cuticchio**”

Opera dei Pupi is a marionette theatrical representation of Frankish romantic poems. The opera of the puppets and the Sicilian tradition of “cantastorîas” (singers of tales) are rooted in the Provençal troubadour tradition in Sicily during the reign of Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, in the first half of the 13th century. The Sicilian marionette theater Opera dei pupi was proclaimed in 2001 and inscribed in 2008 in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists.

After the show you will have the rest of the evening free for dinner on your own.

Sunday, June 18 – Palermo—Monreale

Breakfast is served daily from 7 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

9:00 a.m. We’ll meet our local guide and tour Palermo’s famous “Capo Market” or “Mercato di Capo” (one of Palermo’s typical food market). We will also visit the Immacolata Concezione Church located inside the market.

After the morning at the market, we will head to Monreale. On the way, we will have a panoramic view of Palermo. *(transfer by private motorcoach)*

Monreale is located on the slope of Monte Caputo, overlooking the very fertile valley called "La Conca d'oro" (the Golden Shell), famed for its orange, olive and almond trees, the produce of which is exported in large quantities.

Lunch at “**Antica Enoteca Monreale**”.

We will visit the Cathedral of Monreale.

The cathedral of Monreale is one of the greatest extant examples of Norman architecture anywhere. The church is a national monument of Italy and one of the most important attractions of Sicily.

After lunch we will return to Palermo.

Dinner at “**Torquemada**”. *(transfer by walking)*

Monday, June 19 – Palermo: Service Day

Breakfast is served daily from 7 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

We will spend the day with local University of Palermo law students and the Fulbright-Fondazione Falcone-NIAF scholars to learn about the legacies of Judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino and their impact on Sicily’s judicial system. We will also meet with young Sicilians and representatives of the Fondazione Giovanni e Francesca Falcone. The Fondazione was founded in December 1992 after the assassination of Judge Giovanni Falcone who was killed by the mafia in May 23, 1992 (Strage di Capaci—Capaci Massacre), together with his wife Judge Francesca Morvillo and three escort guards. The principal aim of the Fondazione is to implement initiatives in order to contribute to a real permanent education to legality principles through social and cultural initiatives.

Lunch at Antica Focacceria S. Francesco.

We will also be meeting with Mayor of Palermo this day.

After our day, return to the hotel. Dinner on your own.

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Tuesday, June 20 – Erice—Marsala

Breakfast is served daily from 7 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

8:00 a.m. Departure for Erice. (*transfer by private motorcoach*)

10:00 a.m. Arrival in Erice. We will meet with our local guide for a walking tour.

Erice is a medieval hilltown with ancient origins, close to the port city of Trapani on the island's western coast. The sober historic town is surrounded by defensive town walls, crowned by a castle, and dominates the surrounding area from its mountainous height of approximately 800 metres above sea level.

After our tour, we will have lunch at “**Ulisse Erice**”

After lunch we will head to Marsala. On our way to Marsala we will pass by the salt mines of Trapani.

Hot African winds, long, sun-drenched summer days and shallow coastal waters makes for the perfect recipe for salt-making, thought the Phoenicians some 2,700 years ago. Today, the very same conditions are still being put to good use in the salt pans between Trapani and Marsala.

4:00 p.m. We will arrive in Marsala and visit of the world-famous Florio Marsala factory and Marsala tasting.

Florio is the true superior Marsala and the most famous one in the world. It is produced in the centuries-old Florio cellars from Grillo and Catarratto grapes. Aged for 30 months in old oak barrels, more than that required for compliance with the controlled designation of origin requirements, to create an inimitable and extremely versatile wine. According to legend, it was popularized by John Woodhouse, an English trader who tasted the wine in 1773, while in Marsala, and immediately fell in love with this product of the Sicily.

On the way back we will pass by the monument of Capaci, the site of the May 23rd Massacre of Judge Giovanni Falcone, his wife, Francesca Morvillo, and their three body guards.

Return to Palermo. Free evening and dinner on your own.

Wednesday, June 21 – Egadi Islands: Favignana

Breakfast is served daily from 7 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

****Be sure to wear your bathing suit under your clothes. Please also bring your beach towel and sunscreen.****

Departure for the Port of Trapani. (*transfer by private motorcoach*)

10:40 a.m. Board two private boats with Captain Sinagra for a tour of the Egadi Island of Favignana.

The Aegadian Islands or “Egadi Islands” are a group of five small mountainous islands in the Mediterranean Sea off the northwest coast of Sicily, near the cities of Trapani and Marsala. The historical highpoint of the islands, at least on an “international” level was 241BC when the First Punic War was brought to an end here. Catulus defeated the Carthaginian fleet there and a treaty was signed whereby Sicily was handed over to the Roman Empire. However, the history goes back much further. On both Favignana (the largest and most populated of the islands) and Levanzo (the smallest) there are some Paleolithic and Neolithic cave paintings. Favignana, or La Farfalla, as it is often referred to thanks to its butterfly shape, is the most important of the islands.

Lunch on board with typical Sicilian products.

Return to hotel in Palermo. Dinner in the hotel.

Thursday, June 22 – Cefalu’

Breakfast is served daily from 7 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

8:30 a.m. Departure for Cefalu’. *(transfer by private motorcoach)*

Once we arrive in Cefalu’ we will meet our local guide for a walking tour.

Cefalù is a coastal city in northern Sicily. It’s known for its Norman cathedral, a 12th-century fortress-like structure with elaborate Byzantine mosaics and soaring twin towers. The cathedral is home to the mosaic of “Christ Pantocrator”, said to be one of the greatest advertisements for Christianity on this earth.

After the tour, you will have free time to shop and have lunch on your own. We will then return to Palermo and you will have the rest of the afternoon to pack.

5:45 p.m. Departure for the luxury hotel, Grand Hotel Villa Igiea. *(transfer by private motorcoach)*

Reception and dinner with the NIAF Board of Directors.

After dinner we will return to our hotel.

Friday, June 23 – Departure

**The kitchen will not be open by the time we leave the hotel, so you will have to have breakfast in the airport.*

3:45 a.m. All luggage downstairs in the lobby. No exceptions.

4:00 a.m. Prompt departure for the Palermo Airport Falcone Borsellino

Flight AZ 1778: Depart Palermo, Sicily (PMO) at 6:15 a.m. with arrival in Rome, Italy (FCO) at 7:25 a.m.

Flight AZ 608: Depart Rome, Italy (FCO) at 10:40 a.m. with arrival in New York, New York (JFK) at 2:15 p.m.

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