

Gardens of Sicily & Malta with Ciscoe Morris

April 7th – 20th, 2024

Join us for this escape to Sicily and Malta for gardens, wine, cuisine, and local culture. This tour is limited to 16 guests, and is expected to fill quickly.

The tour includes accommodations, ground transportation, local guides, many of your meals, wine tastings, garden visits, warm sunny days, beautiful seascapes, volcanoes, Greek and Roman ruins.

One note...We've had to reduce our time in Sicily because of a change of flight schedules from Trapani to Malta. The non-stop flight originally scheduled on April 21st isn't operating. We are now flying from Trapani to Valletta on the 20th, with 4 nights in Malta, instead of 3. I never thought that 3 nights was sufficient. Our extra day in Malta will be spend visiting the island of [Gozo](#), connected by fast ferry from Valletta.

Sunday, April 7th

Depart USA for Catania, Sicily (CTA)

Day 1 Monday, April 8th Catania Arrival/Taormina

Arrive Catania Airport in the in the late-afternoon. We'll be met by our driver and guide, followed by a short journey to our hotel in Taormina. Most of the group is arriving one to two days early. We've got to plan our pickup at Catania Airport for the Lufthansa arrival from Munich at 5:45 PM. Please plan to meet me at the airport by 5:30. As soon as we're all accounted for, we'll continue to the hotel in Taormina. After checking in, we'll enjoy our first dinner together in the early evening. Overnight Taormina (D) (Eurostars Monte Tauro Hotel)

Day 2 Tuesday, April 9th Taormina

We'll start the morning with a walking tour of [Taormina](#) and the ancient Greek Amphitheater with our local guide. After a break for lunch on your own in town, we'll enjoy a tour of the gardens at [Hotel Schuler](#). Your afternoon is free to enjoy the town before we meet for dinner in the early evening. Overnight Taormina (BD) (Eurostars Monte Tauro Hotel)

Day 3 **Wednesday, April 10th** **Mount Etna**
We'll begin just after breakfast for our day [Mount Etna](#). Since the views are generally best in the morning, we'll make our planned excursion for the summit early. On our way back to Taormina we'll stop at [Benanti](#), a local wine estate for a tasting of red and white wines and a light lunch. Upon arrival in Taormina, we'll enjoy a late afternoon tour of the gardens of [Casa Cuseni](#). Your evening is free to enjoy one of the many fine restaurants in Taormina. Overnight Taormina (BL) (Eurostars Monte Tauro Hotel)

Day 4 **Thursday, April 11th** **Two great gardens**
We've got two very unique gardens scheduled today with a morning visit to [Il Biviere](#), the gardens of Princess Maria Carla Borghese, which were created out of barren ground almost fifty years ago. After lunch nearby, we'll spend the early afternoon at the [San Giuliano estate in Villasmundo](#), where the head gardener gives us an exclusive insight into Sicilian gardening. We then make our way to our Syracuse hotel with a little free time before meeting for dinner this evening. Overnight Syracuse (BLD)

Day 5 **Friday, April 12th** Syracuse and hill towns
We'll start our time in Siracusa with a local guide and a walking tour of the historic center and the island of Ortigia. You can join our guide and I to take a 30-minute train trip from Syracuse to the Baroque town of Noto for a walking tour before returning in the early evening. Your afternoon and early evening are free to explore and shop. Overnight Syracuse. (B) (Grand Hotel Ortigia)

Day 6 **Saturday, April 13th** **Roman Villa and Agrigento**
We're departing the coast to journey west to the town of Agrigento, known for the hopping off point for Greek Ruins.

First visit is to Piazza Armerina to tour the [Roman Villa at Casale](#), containing some of the best example of Roman Mosaics in the world. We continue east to Tenute Camilleri, a local wine producer working with grapes such as Grillo, Nero d'Avola, Perricone, and Merlot. We'll taste some wine with accompanying snacks before continuing our drive to the southern coast town of Agrigento. You've got some time to relax prior to our dinner this evening. Overnight Agrigento (BSD) (Colleverde Park Hotel)

Day 8 **Sunday, April 14th** **Agrigento and on to Palermo**

for free time this afternoon. Dinner is on your own this evening. Overnight Valletta (B) (Grand Hotel Excelsior)

Day 12 Thursday, April 18th

Valletta

Today will be spent on Gozo, Malta's second largest island and a "can't miss" day of touring. We'll depart from the hotel for a 20-minute walk to the Fast Ferry terminal for our boat at 9:45. We've got a guide and motorcoach joining us on the other side. The day will include a visit to the [Ggantija Temples](#), and the [Xwejni Salt Pans](#). I'm looking into a possible light lunch and product tasting as well at the [Tamena Estate](#).

Day 13 Friday, April 19th

Valletta Environs

We begin the morning with a short coach ride to the west to the ancient walled city of [Mdina](#) for a walking tour of its pedestrian streets. We'll visit [Palazzo Falson](#) with its intimate courtyard garden. After a break for lunch and free time in this medieval city, we detour just a bit out of the way for a visit to the Palace and gardens at [Palazzo Parisio](#) in nearby Naxxar. We'll return to the Valletta hotel in the late afternoon. Our farewell dinner is planned nearby. Overnight Valletta (BD) (Grand Hotel Excelsior)

Day 14 Saturday, April 20th

Flights Home

The Lufthansa flight home departs at an ungodly time. A 6:00 AM departure means that our coach will depart from the hotel at 3:30 AM. Not pretty, but necessary. That gets us to Malta Airport for a 2-hour check in.

This itinerary is about 95% fixed. There may be some changes and deviations, but those will be minimal. As mentioned in the orientation letter, I have come to depend on the Whatsapp program to communicate last minute changes and adjustments. This requires a phone with an international data plan* and the downloaded app.

*If you have no data plan, you can still use the app once you're signed into wifi. This is not an ideal situation. It's best to have a signal.

Brad