

Explore Sicily: Layers of Art, Food & Culture

4 - 14 May 2023



From bases in Palermo, Noto and Taormina a small group of travelers will experience the culture of Sicily through art and food. During 10 days in spring we'll visit food producers, major monuments and out of the way ancient sites, we'll relax over amazing meals while getting a feel for the varied culture of one of the richest regions of Italy. In the capital city of Palermo on the Northwest coast layers of time are palpable: shop in the riotous food markets choosing ingredients for cooking classes, see Byzantine mosaics, Renaissance paintings and ancient sculpture. Enjoy the heartwrenchingly beautiful landscapes and seascapes of western Sicily while out exploring ancient Greek ruins and meeting food producers.

From Noto visit the Baroque villages of the Southeast, spend an afternoon in Siracusa, learn why Aztec style chocolate is made in Modica, taste through the range of the most influential pastry chef in Italy (it's not all sweets), visit a cheesemaker and learn about the ancestral Sicilian lifestyle.

In Taormina on the East coast enjoy the atmosphere and views of the elegant town, visit the ancient and vibrant city of Catania and explore Mt. Etna, an active (very active) volcano with a long tradition of wine making. A tear shed by Dionysius nourished the first ever grapevine that grew from the mineral rich soil — Etna is at the moment the most renowned wine producing zone in the world.

Expect exclusive visits and guided tastings, amazing food and free time to explore.



Elaine Trigiani
experience Italy
www.elainetrigiani.com

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itinerary



Thu 4 May arrival

Arrive at your leisure to Palazzo Planeta in the center of Palermo. First group meeting 6 pm at Palazzo Planeta for an orientation cocktail. Walk to group supper at our favorite fish restaurant.



Fri 5 May Palermo, cooking lesson

We'll walk through the Vuccirìa and Ballarò markets to choose ingredients for a group cooking class / supper. Pit stop at the Martorana with the most spectacular and earliest byzantine mosaics on the island. Casual group lunch and afternoon free to explore on your own or go with Elaine for an optional visit to the regional paintings gallery at Palazzo Abatellis. Evening cooking lesson and group supper.

Sat 6 May Selinunte and Mazara

Day trip to the south to meet with a miller of Sicilian heritage wheat varieties and walk through the evocative archaeological site at ancient Selinunte: bastion on the western edge of Greek ruled Sicily with the remains of temples and civic areas on a bluff above the Mediterranean Sea. Casual lunch on the beach followed by a visit to the casbah of Mazara del Vallo to see the ancient Greek bronze Dancing Satyr. Evening free in Palermo.



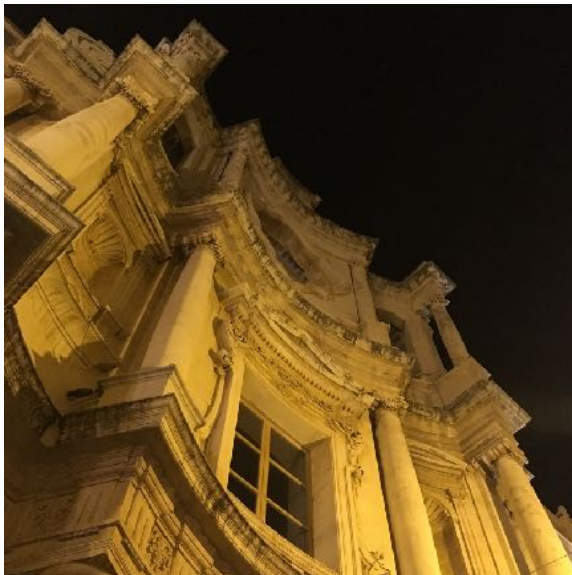
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Sun 7 May Segesta, cooking lesson

Morning out to Segesta, an ancient Elimian settlement on the Greek/Carthaginian border with a spectacular temple and theater with sea view. Meeting and tasting with a winemaker in the Alcamo production zone. Casual lunch in the lovely piazza at Alcamo and a visit to the seaside village of Scopello for a gelato and a coffee. Evening cooking lesson and group supper.

Mon 8 May to Noto via Piazza Armerina

Transfer to Noto with a stop in central Sicily for a visit with an archaeologist who is an expert on the area's ancient remains: the most extensive ancient Roman mosaic cycle ever discovered at the Villa Romana at Casale and the artifacts now housed at the museum at Aidone including spectacular objects recently recovered from US museums. Evening free in Noto.



Tues 9 May Noto & Siracusa

Morning to explore Noto and brunch created by the most influential pastry chef in Italy. Afternoon in Ortigia, the lovely, lively peninsula that was ancient Siracusa with archaeological sites, optional visit with Elaine to see the Basilica of Santa Lucia and Caravaggio's Burial of St. Lucy. Evening free in Noto.

Wed 10 May Modica

Morning visit to a cheesemaker in the countryside with lunch to follow in Modica, county seat during centuries of Spanish dominion. See medieval frescoes, learn about and taste Aztec chocolate and traditional pastries. Evening free in Noto.

Thu 11 May Palazzolo Acreide

Day trip to Palazzolo Acreide to visit Greek ruins and Baroque churches and we'll learn all about their sausage making tradition during a cooking class on a farm that raises heritage pigs. Evening free in Noto.

Sat 12 May Catania & Taormina

Transfer to Taormina via the amazing show of culture that is the fish market in Catania. Visit the Duomo, via Etna and have lunch in the market. Afternoon and evening free in Taormina.



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Fri 13 May Mt. Etna

Go up onto the volcano with a naturalist and visit a winery on the northern flank at Randazzo. Tasting lunch of classic *tavola calda* and sweets on the eastern flank at Santa Venerina. Free afternoon in Taormina and group farewell supper.

Sat 14 May departure

Transfers to Catania Fontanarossa CTA airport can be arranged.



Please note that this initial itinerary is a template of what to expect. Specific visits are subject to change depending on producer availability and as new opportunities present themselves. The people and places that we will be visiting are not typical tourist destinations so plans may be modified at the last minute. We will craft the final itinerary to provide the experience as described above.

cost

The cost for this ten day itinerary, for an exclusive group of 10 - 12 travelers is \$6,990 per person in double occupancy hotel rooms; supplement for single occupancy is \$1,425. Deposit due on 1 December 2022, final payment due on 1 March 2023.

activity level

Your activity level should allow you to walk for 2 - 4 miles per day including up and down steps, on uneven cobblestone streets and through vineyards and olive groves.

hotels

We chose centrally located accommodations in each of our bases. In Palermo we are staying at the Palazzo Planeta, self catering apartments with kitchens for group cooking lessons and suppers (you will find breakfast supplies in your apartment, there is a coffee bar on our block and one of the best pastry shops in the city is just a few minutes walk from the palazzo). In Noto we are at the beautiful boutique Gagliardi Hotel with its lovely rooftop terrace. In Taormina we are at the charming Hotel Villa Taormina with gardens and sea views. Superior rooms have been booked in the hotels, if you would like to upgrade your room category at your own expense or if you would like to remain in Taormina for a few days on your own we can help with the arrangements.



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Elaine Trigiani program coordinator & culinary educator

Elaine is from Mississippi in the USA, worked as an art historian at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and has been living in Italy for 20 years learning about Italian foods and culinary traditions from her Sicilian relatives, artisan producers, farmers and chefs. She has an MA in art history, is president of The della Donna Company and is certified as a taster of olive oil by the Region of Tuscany and of wine by ONAV, the *Organizzazione Nazionale Assaggiatori di Vino*. She has written two guidebooks to Sicily, develops recipes, teaches cooking lessons, leads guided tastings and designs and leads culinary travel programs introducing her clients to the culture through visits with genuine producers and creative chefs. Elaine extra virgin olive oil.
more information here: www.elainetrigiani.com



Celia Cerasoli culinary educator

Celia was raised in a large Sicilian-American family just a short train ride from New York City where her life centered around cooking and sharing meals with family and friends. Having studied art Celia worked at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the International Center of Photography and curated the collections at the Gibbes Museum of Art and Mepkin Abbey in Charleston, SC. While living in Rome for a year she discovered her true calling: feeding people and sharing the "Italian love of life," her culinary inspiration comes from recipes inherited from her parents and grandparents. After going back to school and graduating from the New York Restaurant School, in the mid 1980s she opened Celia's Porta Via, a neighborhood Italian bistro that was a favorite of locals and tourists for 15 years. Always on the culinary scene Celia developed Celia's lasagna, caters as a private chef, teaches others to cook... and is finally getting around to writing a family cook book!
more information here: www.theperfectartichoke.com



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