

ART & ARCHITECTURE IN SICILY

A boutique art journey crafted for curious minds and lovers of refined, intimate travel

Join us for an intimate ten-day journey, from 29 September to 8 October 2027, designed for curious travellers who wish to experience the island through art, architecture, archaeology and local culture, immersing ourselves in three millennia of history.

Travelling with a small group of just seven guests, we move beyond the surface of Sicily to explore its many layers — from ancient Greek temples and Arab-Norman mosaics to Roman villas, Baroque towns, and one of Caravaggio's final masterpieces. Guided by expert scholars and enriched by thoughtful local encounters, authentic cuisine, and carefully chosen accommodation, this is a journey for those who value depth, beauty, conversation, and a more personal way of travelling.



THE JOURNEY AT A GLANCE



Dates: 29 Sept–8 Oct 2027
Duration: 10 days / 9 nights
Group size: maximum 7 guests
Starts: Palermo
Ends: Syracuse, with transfer to Catania Airport
Accommodation: 4-star character hotels and Palaces
Pace: relaxed cultural touring, with free time
Price: EUR 4,990 per person, twin/double occupancy. Supplement for single use of a double room 900 euros.

Our journey begins with three days in Palermo, Sicily's vibrant capital, a fascinating mosaic of cultural influences reflected in its architecture, art, food and people. Guided by an expert art historian, we will explore some of Sicily's most extraordinary artistic and architectural treasures, from the magnificent Cathedral of Monreale, with its breathtaking Byzantine mosaics, to the remarkable collections of Palazzo Abatellis and the exquisite stucco masterpieces of Giacomo Serpotta.

Leaving behind the lively atmosphere of the Sicilian capital, we head into the tranquillity of the Madonie Mountains for a three-night stay in the charming village of Polizzi Generosa. Here, we will meet the locals, experience traditional village life and discover a lesser-known side of Sicily, far from the usual tourist trails. Polizzi Generosa will also be our base for exploring Agrigento, where a professional archaeologist will bring the ancient world to life as we discover the magnificent Valley of the Temples and the outstanding collections of the Archaeological Museum.

From the Madonie Mountains, we travel southeast, stopping along the way at the extraordinary Villa Romana del Casale, where an archaeologist will introduce us to the fascinating stories depicted in over 3,500 square metres of ancient Roman mosaics, among the finest and best-preserved in the world.

Our journey continues to Ragusa Ibla, a picturesque and atmospheric town renowned for its magnificent 18th-century Sicilian Baroque architecture. Ragusa Ibla will also serve as our base for exploring nearby Modica, celebrated for its distinctive architecture and rich culinary traditions.

Throughout our journey, whenever the opportunity arises, we will also enjoy Sicily's vibrant cultural life, from traditional Sicilian theatre to classical music performances, adding another dimension to our experience of the island.

We conclude our journey in Ortigia, the historic heart of Syracuse and one of Italy's most elegant and atmospheric destinations. It is here that we will say our farewells, no longer simply a group of travellers, but friends who have shared ten memorable days discovering Sicily together.

29 SEPTEMBER - WELCOME TO SICILY

Overnight in Palermo

Upon your arrival at Palermo Airport, a private transfer will take you to Hotel Palazzo Sovrana, where you can settle in and relax after your journey. At 6:30 p.m., we will gather on the hotel's rooftop terrace for welcome drinks and introductions, accompanied by a glimpse into Sicily's fascinating history and the experiences that await us over the coming days. As evening falls, we will share our first dinner together, enjoying delicious Sicilian cuisine and lovely views across the rooftops of Palermo.





30 SEPTEMBER - ART, DEVOTION AND TRADITIONS IN PALERMO

Overnight in Palermo

We begin our day with a guided visit to Palazzo Abatellis, a magnificent 15th-century palace that houses one of Sicily's finest art collections. Our attention will turn to some of its most remarkable masterpieces, including the haunting fresco The Triumph of Death and Antonello da Messina's exquisite Virgin Annunciate, one of the masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance. After a leisurely break, we continue to the Oratorio di San Lorenzo, an intimate chapel adorned with the extraordinary stucco masterpieces of Giacomo Serpotta. Here, sculpture, theatricality and religious devotion come together in one of Palermo's most exquisite Baroque interiors.





Our final visit of the day takes us to the Church and Convent of Santa Caterina, a magnificent celebration of light, colour and Baroque splendour. We will also have the opportunity to sample traditional Sicilian sweets, prepared according to recipes passed down through generations of cloistered nuns. The remainder of the afternoon and evening will be yours to enjoy at leisure.

1 OCTOBER - MARKET LIFE AND ARAB-NORMAN SPLENDOUR

Overnight in Palermo

We begin the day with a stroll to *Mercato del Capo*, Palermo's historic food market, where we will savour its flavours, colours, and lively soul. The street art of this neighbourhood will also offer an opportunity to explore Sicily's complex history with the Mafia and, above all, the courage and determination of those who have fought against it. From here, we continue with a visit to Palermo's Cathedral, a remarkable monument shaped over many centuries. The day will conclude with a visit to Monreale cathedral and cloister, one of the great masterpieces of medieval art and architecture.





2 OCTOBER - EXPLORING SMALL VILLAGES AND COMMUNITIES

Overnight in Polizzi Generosa

Today, we leave behind the lively streets of Palermo and journey into the peaceful landscapes of the Madonie Mountains, where we will settle into the historic Palazzo Notar Nicchi, in the charming hilltop village of Polizzi Generosa. In the afternoon, we will explore the village, uncovering its hidden artistic and architectural treasures, meeting its welcoming community and discovering the stories of some of its internationally renowned figures. We will end the day with a convivial dinner together, savouring traditional dishes prepared with fresh, locally sourced ingredients from the Madonie Mountains.





3 OCTOBER - THE VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES

Overnight in Polizzi Generosa

The morning is yours to enjoy at leisure in Polizzi Generosa. Around midday, we will set off for Agrigento and the magnificent Valley of the Temples, one of the world's most extraordinary archaeological sites. Accompanied by an expert archaeologist, we will delve into the fascinating history of ancient Greek Sicily, discovering the stories behind its remarkable temples and the civilisation that created them. Our exploration will also take us to the Archaeological Museum, home to an exceptional collection of artefacts from ancient Akragas. In the evening, we return to Polizzi Generosa for a convivial dinner together, sharing impressions of the day's discoveries.





4 OCTOBER - MEETING THE COMMUNITY

Overnight in Polizzi Generosa



Today, we spend the day in and around Polizzi Generosa, beginning with a visit to the workshop of Giovanni d'Angelo, a seventh-generation ceramicist who carries on the centuries-old traditions of Sicilian maiolica. We will discover the techniques and artistry behind this beautiful craft before trying our hand at painting our own ceramic tile — a unique and personal keepsake to take home as a memory of Sicily.



In the afternoon, we will meet Marta from Verbumcaudo, a cooperative of young locals who have brought new life to land once confiscated from the Mafia. Through sustainable agriculture and a strong commitment to their community, they are transforming a difficult legacy into a story of hope, renewal and opportunity. We will hear about their inspiring work, sample their locally grown products and discover how this remarkable initiative is helping to shape a brighter future for the area.

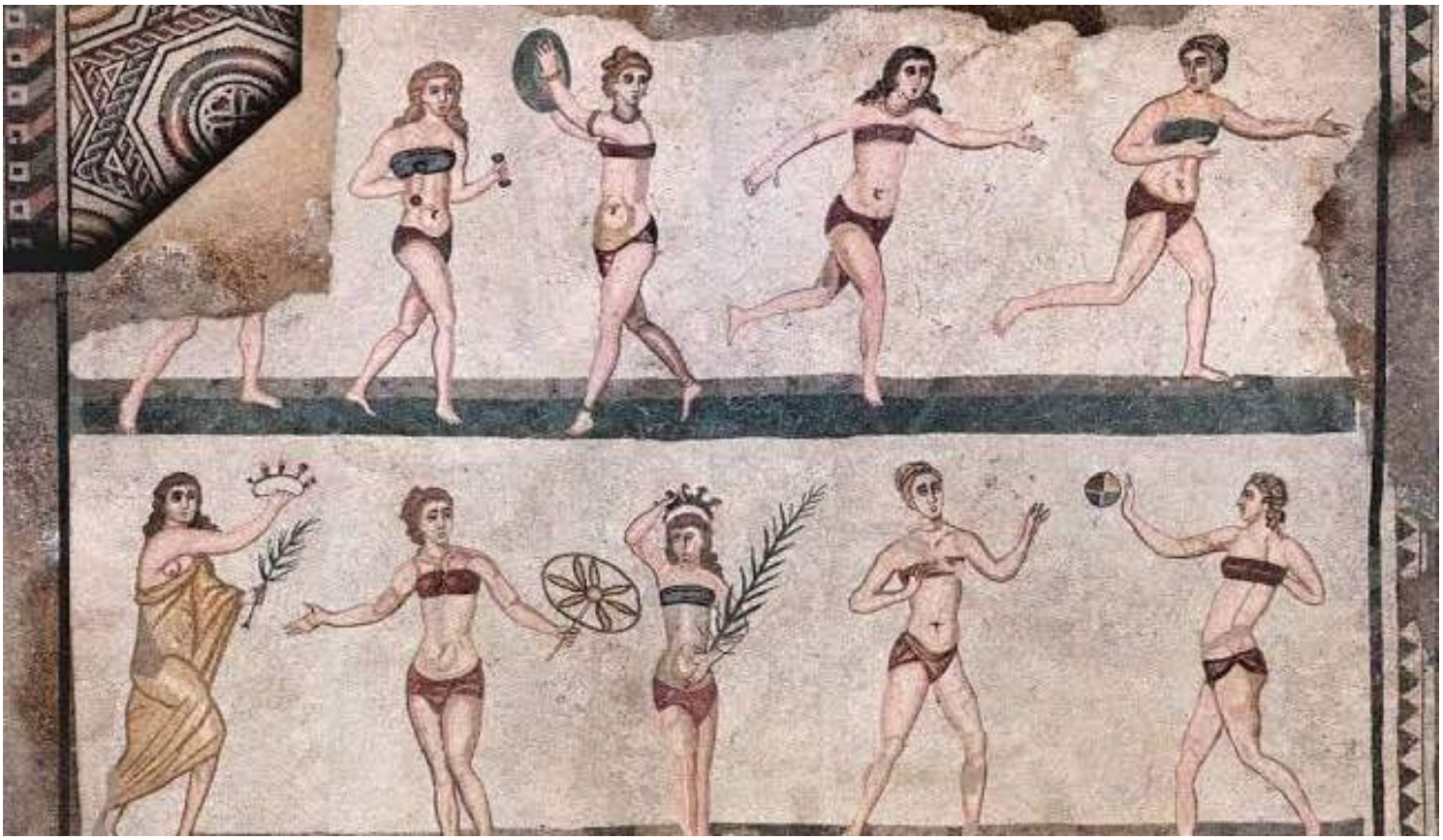
The evening is yours to enjoy at leisure, with dinner independently.

5 OCTOBER - ANCIENT ROMAN MOSAICS UNVEIL FASCINATING STORIES

Overnight in Ragusa Ibla



Today, we leave the Madonie Mountains behind and journey southeast towards Ragusa Ibla, discovering another remarkable chapter of Sicily's rich cultural heritage along the way. Our first stop is the extraordinary Villa Romana del Casale, celebrated for its 3,500 square metres of exceptionally well-preserved Roman mosaics. Accompanied by an expert archaeologist, we will explore this magnificent ancient residence, uncovering the fascinating stories and intricate details. We then continue through the landscapes of southeastern Sicily towards Ragusa Ibla, where we will settle into our next accommodation, surrounded by the timeless charm of this enchanting Baroque town.



6 OCTOBER - LOCAL FLAVOURS AND ARCHITECTURE IN MODICA

Overnight in Ragusa Ibla

The morning is yours to enjoy at leisure in Ragusa Ibla, perhaps wandering through its picturesque streets or simply soaking up the atmosphere of this beautiful Baroque town.



In the afternoon, we make our way to nearby Modica, where we will discover some of the town's most remarkable artistic and architectural treasures, from the fascinating Byzantine cave church of San Nicolò Inferiore to the magnificent Baroque churches of San Pietro and San Giorgio. No visit to Modica would be complete without tasting its famous chocolate, which we will sample at one of Sicily's oldest chocolate makers.



We then visit Eolo's art studio, where we will gain a personal insight into his artistic practice, exploring the world of pigments, colour and traditional painting techniques that have inspired artists for centuries.

We end the day with a relaxed, home-cooked dinner, sharing good food and conversation in the warmth of a Sicilian home.

7 OCTOBER - EXPLORING SYRACUSE ART AND HISTORY

Overnight in Syracuse (Ortigia)

Today, we make our way to Ortigia, the enchanting island that forms the historic heart of Syracuse. Our exploration will take us to some of the island's most remarkable treasures, including Caravaggio's moving masterpiece The Burial of Saint Lucy, the ancient Temple of Apollo, the oldest Doric temple in Sicily, and the magnificent Cathedral, where Baroque splendour meets the grandeur of an ancient Greek temple. The afternoon is yours to enjoy at leisure. As evening falls, we will gather for a special farewell dinner, a chance to share memories of our journey, celebrate the friendships made along the way.





8 OCTOBER - DEPARTURE



As our journey comes to an end, you may wish to extend your stay in Sicily and continue exploring this fascinating island. Perhaps linger a little longer in beautiful Ortigia, discover the vibrant city of Catania, explore the dramatic landscapes of Mount Etna or visit the enchanting town of Taormina. Alternatively, you might consider spending a few days in Malta, just a short journey from Sicily, with its own extraordinary wealth of history, art and culture. For those departing, private transfers can be arranged to Catania or Comiso Airport.

Should you wish to extend your travels, we would be delighted to help you create a personalised itinerary, tailored to your interests and preferred pace.



ACCOMMODATION

Hotel Palazzo Sovrana (luxury serviced apartments) - Palermo *(3 Nights)*

Palazzo Sovrana is a beautifully restored historic residence offering elegant suites and warm, refined hospitality in the heart of Palermo. Overlooking the magnificent Teatro Massimo and just a short stroll from the city's most celebrated landmarks, it effortlessly combines historic charm with contemporary elegance.





Palazzo Notar Nicchi (Private historic palace) - Polizzi Generosa *(3 Nights)*

Palazzo Notar Nicchi beautifully combines historic charm with contemporary design, offering a peaceful and comfortable retreat. Its welcoming communal spaces, adorned with carefully curated books and contemporary artworks, create a warm and inspiring atmosphere. Ideally located in the heart of Polizzi Generosa, it provides an inviting and authentic base from which to discover the village and the surrounding beauty of nature.





ACCOMMODATION

A.D. 1768 Boutique Hotel (4 star hotel) - Ragusa Ibla *(2 Nights)*

A.D. 1768 Boutique Hotel is a beautifully restored 18th-century noble residence overlooking Piazza Duomo, in the heart of Ragusa Ibla. Original frescoes, antique furnishings and contemporary artworks create a refined atmosphere where history and modern design meet. Its exceptional location offers an intimate and charming retreat surrounded by the magnificent architecture of Sicilian Baroque.





Palazzo Artemide (4 star hotel) - Syracuse, Ortigia *(1 Night)*

Palazzo Artemide is a refined boutique hotel set within a beautifully restored 19th-century palace in the historic heart of Ortigia. Elegant interiors, vaulted ceilings and carefully selected furnishings evoke the timeless charm of Sicilian architecture. Just steps from the magnificent Cathedral, it offers an intimate and atmospheric retreat from which to discover the beauty of Ortigia.





TOUR LEADERS



Eolo Paul Bottaro

Artist & Curator at Sicily Art Tours

An Australian artist of Sicilian heritage, Eolo is internationally recognised for his evocative works inspired by the classical traditions of Italian art. Although born and raised in Australia, Sicily has always been central to his artistic identity, a place of ancestral memory and continual inspiration. Over the past decade, he has divided his time between Australia and Sicily, where he has established both a studio and a home. Today, alongside his artistic practice, Eolo curates and leads small-group journeys devoted to art, architecture and archaeology, offering discerning travellers an insider's perspective on the island's most captivating treasures.



Serena Firera

Founder at Sicily Art Tours

Born in Sicily, Serena combines a background in psychology and publishing with a lifelong passion for art and culture. Guided by a refined sense of beauty and human connection, she founded Sicily Art Tours to offer travellers a deeper way to experience her island, through its artistic heritage, its living traditions, and its people. Serena curates each journey with an eye for authenticity and a taste for elegance, collaborating with scholars, artists, and local experts to create truly distinctive cultural experiences. Her vision is to reveal Sicily not only as a destination, but as an encounter with history, creativity, and the warmth of its people.

Experiences shared by guests on previous journeys

Rena B.
University Researcher
Toronto, Canada

I recently had the privilege of taking a 12-day curated tour of Sicily with Sicily Art Tours and it was unlike any travel experience I have had in my many years of exploring Europe. This was so much more than a sightseeing tour; it was an immersive journey into the heart, history, and soul of an extraordinary island.

The pace of the tour was perfect. There was never a sense of rushing from one destination to the next or sacrificing meaningful experiences to keep to a rigid schedule. Our guides were local scholars, each bringing their own knowledge, perspective, and lived experience to the places we visited. Their insights brought history to life in ways that no guidebook ever could.

Another highlight was the exceptional choice of accommodations. Each hotel had its own distinctive character, history, and sense of place. The Sicilian House in Polizzi Generosa was a beautifully renovated private home filled with local art and Venetian chandeliers. In Ragusa Ibla, we stayed at the Hotel Antico Convento dei Cappuccini, a remarkable 17th-century former monastery. These were not simply places to sleep; they were integral to the experience of discovering Sicily.

Yet, some of my fondest memories are of the people we met along the way. Maria, the housekeeper at The Sicilian House, welcomed us with homemade bread for breakfast. Giovanni, a local ceramist, patiently guided us through decorating a traditional Sicilian tile. And Eolo, a talented artist himself, generously shared his studio and his work with us. These personal encounters gave the journey a warmth and authenticity that made it truly unforgettable.

What Serena and Eolo have created with Sicily Art Tours is something very special. We never felt like tourists checking destinations off a list.

REVIEWS

Instead, we felt like curious travelers being welcomed into a place, its history, its traditions, and the lives of its people. We came away with a deeper appreciation of an island that is beautiful, layered, and wonderfully complex.

As a Canadian of Italian heritage, this journey was especially meaningful to me. I wholeheartedly encourage anyone who wants to experience the real Sicily—not just its famous sights, but its art, culture, people, and spirit—to travel with Sicily Art Tours.

An exceptional experience that I will carry with me for a lifetime. Grazie, Serena and Eolo, for sharing the richness and beauty of your Sicily with us!

Jan Bollington-Dixon
Guide at The Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art.
Brisbane, Australia

I found the passion and knowledge of Serena, Eolo and the art gallery curators proved to be a highlight of the trip. They gave both social and art historical context which afforded me a deeper understanding of the many exquisite paintings and sculptures. The absolute highlight was to see so many Caravaggios in situ. I knew he had worked in Sicily but didn't realise how many beautiful masterpieces he produced there. The whole of the art tour was a wonderful experience with stunning scenery, picturesque villages and authentically delicious Sicilian dining experiences. Our stay at the Sicilian House in the village of Polizzi Generosa was my favorite part of the trip. What a gem that turned out to be. Prepare to be wowed by local knowledge, celebrity neighbours and art treasures! Serena and Eolo are the perfect tour leaders. Great knowledge and wonderful people.

REVIEWS

Patrick Dixon
Consulting Property Advisor
Brisbane, Australia

As I had dragged my wife along on golfing trips in Ireland, Scotland, and America, I felt obligated to accompany her when she suggested we join Serena and Eolo's Sicilian Art, Culture, and Food Tour. Given my elementary knowledge of ancient history—and even less of art—my expectations for enjoying the tour were low, although I was looking forward to the "food" portion of the trip! That assumption was quickly shattered. I soon became engrossed in the fascinating history of Sicily and how it was expressed through the art we viewed and the places we visited. Thanks to Serena and her gallery curator's deep knowledge, what could have been, for me, a string of boring churches, statues, and ruins instead came vividly to life. Byzantine, Greek, and Arab history were woven into the storytelling, turbocharging the experience. My eyes were opened to a whole new world. Add to this the authentic Sicilian accommodations, a group of diverse and interesting fellow travelers, a variety of splendid meals (I especially loved the street food), and the patience and charm of Serena and Eolo—and this tour became a truly life-enhancing experience.

Anthia Galanis
Public sector employee
Melbourne, Australia

Thank you Serena and Eolo for such an extraordinary experience - words simply can't do justice to your sense of artistry, dedication and love of your island home, your commitment to sharing your culture, history, landscape, and food (I am still digesting mentally and physically the Sicilian riches you presented to us). Thank you from the bottom of heart - I will always cherish our time together forever. This is not goodbye, it's arrivederci until we meet again.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is this journey for?

This journey is designed for curious travellers who appreciate art, architecture, archaeology, good food, stimulating conversation and a slower, more personal way of discovering a place. It is particularly suited to those who value cultural depth, authentic experiences and comfort, without the formality of an academic tour or the hurried pace of conventional group travel.

What time do daily activities start?

Our days generally begin around 10:00 a.m., allowing time for a leisurely breakfast and a relaxed start to the morning.

What level of fitness is required?

A moderate level of fitness is recommended. Some days involve approximately three to four hours of leisurely walking or standing, particularly during guided visits to museums and archaeological sites. However, we maintain an unhurried pace, with regular breaks and opportunities to rest.

Can I skip some of the scheduled activities for more free time?

Absolutely. We understand that everyone enjoys travelling at their own pace. While we have carefully designed the itinerary to offer a rich and rewarding experience, you are welcome to skip certain activities and enjoy some additional time to yourself.

Which flights should I book to and from Sicily?

We recommend arriving at Palermo Airport on 29 September 2027, ideally after 1:30 p.m., as check-in at our accommodation begins at 2:30 p.m. For your departure on 8 October 2027, we suggest booking a flight from either Catania or Comiso Airport, unless you plan to extend your stay in Sicily. These suggestions are intended to make your arrival and departure as smooth and comfortable as possible. However, you are welcome to choose alternative flight times to suit your travel plans.

Can I take this tour on different dates?

Yes. If our scheduled dates do not suit you, we would be delighted to discuss a bespoke itinerary, tailored to your interests, preferred dates and travel companions.

What is the weather like in Sicily in late September and early October?

Late September and early October are wonderful times to explore Sicily. The weather is generally mild and pleasant, with daytime temperatures typically ranging from 22°C to 26°C and plenty of sunshine. Occasional rain showers are possible, and temperatures can vary between coastal and inland areas.

PRICING, TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Pricing

€4,990 per person, based on two guests sharing a twin or double room (non-smoking).

Single occupancy supplement: €900. The tour is fully escorted and includes:

- Nine nights' accommodation with daily breakfast.
- Five dinners, including house wine. Additional alcoholic beverages are charged separately.
- Welcome drinks on arrival and selected Sicilian street food tastings.
- A hands-on ceramic tile painting workshop with a local artisan, creating your own personalised piece of Sicilian craftsmanship to take home.
- All entrance fees to museums, archaeological sites and monuments featured in the itinerary.
- Expert-led visits with professional guides, art historians and archaeologists.
- Private transportation throughout the journey.
- A private airport transfer upon arrival in Palermo.
- A transfer to Catania or Comiso Airport on 8 October 2027.
- All local city taxes.
- Personal assistance before, during and after your journey.

What's Not Included

International and domestic flights, travel insurance, personal expenses, meals and beverages not specifically mentioned in the itinerary, and any optional activities or services arranged independently.

How to Confirm Your Booking

A deposit of 30% of the total tour price is required to secure your place.

The remaining balance is due 60 days before the tour begins.

Cancellation Policy

More than 60 days before departure: Your deposit will be retained as a credit towards another Sicily Art Tours journey departing within 12 months of the original tour date.

Between 60 and 30 days before departure: 40% of the total tour price will be refunded, while the remaining 60% will be retained as a credit towards another Sicily Art Tours journey departing within 12 months of the original tour date.

Less than 30 days before departure: No refund or credit will be available

To enquire about availability, discuss the itinerary or simply have a personal conversation about the journey, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact Serena and Eolo at

SicilyARTours@gmail.com