

Amalfi, Puglia, & Sicily

September 17 – October 1, 2025



Castel dell'Ovo



Naples Harbor Promenade

Wednesday, September 17

Arrive in Naples. A private driver will meet you in the airport's Arrivals Hall and transfer you to the 4* Royal Continental Hotel on the Naples Waterfront in the shadow of Mt. Vesuvius. Settle into your superior-class room with views of the sea and the legendary Castel dell'Ovo, built by the Normans in the 12th century. After your long flight, you may want to take a stroll to the Castle along the scenic harbor promenade across the street from the hotel. In the evening, gather with your friends in the hotel's Elements Lounge for a Neapolitan feast of Prosecco, antipasti, and Margherita pizza! (D)

Hotel Royal Continental www.royalgroup.it/royalcontinental/en/hotel (1 night)



Pompeii



View from Villa Maria Pia

Thursday, September 18

After breakfast, depart Naples for the short drive to Pompeii. Meet your guide for a 2-hour tour of this ancient historical site. Ancient Pompeii grew from Greek and Etruscan roots to become an important Roman city. Then, on August 24, 79 A.D., everything changed as the city was buried under 30 feet of hot volcanic ash. Preserved in time, this event later gave archaeologists priceless information about daily Roman life. Visit nearby Basco de Medici Winery for a tour and tastings, and a lunch of typical Vesuvian cuisine. Continue on to the Amalfi Coast. Arrive in the charming village of Praiano in the afternoon and check into the lovely Villa Maria Pia Hotel where every room has a breathtaking view of the sea. (Praiano is easily accessible to nearby Positano by local taxi, water taxi, or tourist bus.) The evening is at your leisure to enjoy a light dinner on the hotel's terrace or at a nearby restaurant. (B, L)

Hotel Villa Maria Pia www.villamariapia-praiano.com (3 nights)



Amalfi Town



Ristorante Garden, Ravello

Friday, September 19

With 2 vehicles and 2 guides, you and your group will comfortably tour the stunning Amalfi Coast. Traveling east on the coastal road, visit hill and harbor-hugging towns and historic ruins. First stop is dramatic Amalfi Town, founded by the Romans to become one of the most powerful Mediterranean republics in the 9th - 11th centuries. Visit the picturesque Cathedral and stroll the lemon-scented side streets. From Amalfi, climb 1,200 feet above sea level to explore the grand villas and palazzos of Ravello, once residences of wealthy merchants who built the remarkable churches that dot the town. Enjoy lunch at Ristorante Garden, a hillside-clinging restaurant in Ravello with incredible views of the coastline. Later, hop the convenient local bus to Praiano's beach or piazza to watch the sunset. (B, L)



Private Catamaran to Capri



Capri Green Grotto

Saturday, September 20

Visit picturesque Positano in the early morning before the crowds converge, beginning at the top at Piazza dei Mulini. Leisurely stroll the charming lane downhill, stopping at lovely shops and historical sites along the way. Arriving at the harbor, you will step aboard your private, luxurious Catamaran. Set sail on a journey to the most iconic and awe-inspiring geological features around the island of Capri and the Coast of Sorrento. Spend the morning exploring Capri from the sea, stopping at the many natural wonders such as the Natural Arch and the White, Green, Red, and Blue Grottoes. Enjoy refreshments as you leisurely cruise the Mediterranean with the boat's friendly crew of two. At strategic stops, step off the back of the boat into the sea to take a dip in the amazingly clear waters. Continue on your journey to the stunning Coast of Sorrento, disembarking at Nerano, a rustic fishing village famous for its pristine coastline, historic center, and cuisine specialty -- *spaghetti alla Nerano*. After a leisurely lunch on the waterfront, board your boat for more amazing geological and historical sites along the Sorrento Coast. At the end of your cruise in the late afternoon, disembark in Positano. You can opt to return to the hotel or stay in Positano for a sunset dinner, returning to the hotel by taxi. (B, L)



Puglia Landscape



Masseria Petrarolo Courtyard

Sunday, September 21

Depart the Amalfi Coast for ancient Puglia, the heel of Italy's boot. Puglia is a destination for travelers seeking an authentic Italian experience with its beautiful beaches, historical sites, hilltop villages, and regional cooking. On the 4-hour drive in a comfortable Mercedes minibus, make scenic stops along the way. Arrive at the elegant Masseria Petrarolo, a traditional, noble farmhouse estate, once fortified for protection from invaders. The Masseria has been lovingly restored and transformed into a stylish villa, blending original rustic charm with modern comforts. Services include daily housekeeping, continental breakfast, and gourmet lunches and dinners prepared by a professional chef. After a tour of the estate with Francesco, settle in to your luxurious room, enjoy lunch at your leisure, wander the estate's expansive grounds, swim in the heated pools, play tennis, lounge on the terrace. In the evening, join your friends for a dinner prepared on the grill and served in the outdoor courtyard. (B, L, D)

Masseria Petrarolo www.masseriapetrarolo.com (6 nights)



Sassi of Matera



Bread of Altamura

Monday, September 22

Enjoy a full day guided experience going back in time to visit the Sassi di Matera and sample the bread of Altamura. The Sassi cave dwellings are prehistoric shelters believed to be among the first human settlements in Italy. The area's natural limestone caves are what first drew Neolithic inhabitants more than 7,000 years ago. Continuously occupied for centuries, they are considered one of the most unique landscapes in Europe. After strolling the ancient Sassi with your guide, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. In Altamura, sample the famous bread baked in this region since Roman times. In 37 BC, a Roman poet hailed the bread as the best he had ever eaten. For centuries, it was the villagers' main staple and each family prepared a large dough of bread at home and then took it to the public oven to bake with other loaves made by families from the village, with each loaf engraved with the family's name. In the evening, following your chef-prepared dinner in the formal dining room, retire to the parlor for fun and games. (B, L, D)



Monopoli



Cooking Class & Dinner

Tuesday, September 23

At this half-way point of your trip, enjoy a leisurely day at the Masseria – relaxing on the terrace, swimming in one of the two heated pools, playing tennis (or pickle ball) on the astro-turf court, riding bikes along country roads. Pick up your prepared to-go lunch and choose any of the inviting areas in the Masseria's expansive grounds to enjoy a picnic. And/or, take a taxi to nearby Monopoli, an ancient fishing village on the Adriatic Sea with white-washed houses, colorful fishing boats, and crystal-clear turquoise water. In the evening, enjoy a special cooking and dining experience at a historic farmhouse, home to the country kitchen of two passionate cooks, Marina and Marta, who will host you for this evening's delicious dinner. Marina is also a sommelier so you can be sure the wines will be perfectly paired with the cuisine. The traditional meal will involve the freshest, seasonal ingredients. Marta and Marina will be happy to share the secrets of local dishes and ancient techniques of southern Italian cooking. (B, L, D)



Burrata Cheese Tasting



Alberobello Trulli Houses

Wednesday, September 24

This afternoon, you will first visit a farm that has been raising dairy cows for generations to produce Burrata cheese, the cousin of Mozzarella. You will meet the cheese artisan who twists knots of fresh Burrata before your eyes. At the family's table, you will enjoy a sampling of the freshest cheese you will ever taste as well as a meal of local farm fresh products. From there, you will enter a fairytale land in the town of Alberobello. Here the streets are lined with hundreds of *trulli* houses: dry-stone houses with conical roofs, complete with their own rainwater collection and storage. Dating as far back as the mid-14th century, these antique stone huts shape the landscape of the town (although the technique used to make them dates back to prehistoric times). Due to its precious architecture and heritage, the town was granted UNESCO status in 1996. Alberobello is also designated one of *I Borghi piu belli d'Italia* ("The most beautiful villages of Italy"), by Italy's National Tourism Council. Stroll along the picturesque winding alleys with your local guide and step into another world, full of folklore and traditions. (B, L, D)



Ancient Roman Theater, Lecce



Baroque Architecture, Lecce

Thursday, September 25

This morning, depart for a full day guided tour of the city of Lecce, often referred to as the “Florence of the South” with classic art and architecture around every corner. This ancient town is filled with precious monuments, stunning churches, ancient ruins, and famed restaurants. Beginning with the Romans in the third century BC, Lecce was conquered by many invaders over the centuries. It was the Spanish who left behind a treasure trove of 17th century Baroque architecture so unique, it has been given its own name, Barocco Leccese. You will first visit a nearby winery for tastings of local wines, followed by lunch and a guided walking tour of Lecce’s historical center. In the evening, enjoy a chef-prepared traditional dinner under the stars at one of the Masseria’s outdoor dining areas. (B, L, D)



Ostuni



Ancient Olive Tree

Friday, September 26

Take the morning to relax. After a casual lunch, your driver will pick you up to visit Puglia’s most picturesque hill-top village, the “white city” of Ostuni. Inhabited since the Stone Age, and rebuilt by the Greeks in the 4th century BC, Ostuni sits on three limestone hills, 755 feet above sea level. White-washed buildings, lovely piazzas, and Aragonese towers rise out of the rock and provide stunning views over the sweeping plains of olive trees all the way to the Adriatic Sea. Take a walk with your guide and immerse yourself in the history and lifestyle of this town. Then visit a family-owned historic estate for a tour and tasting of extra virgin olive oil. The olive trees in Puglia are incredibly special. Some are more than one thousand years old, monumental trees bearing the gnarly twist and knots of the passing centuries. Puglia reigns supreme in olive production, producing 40% of Italy’s olive oil. On your last evening at the Masseria, gather with your friends on the Masseria’s roof-top terrace for a toast to Puglia accompanied by fresh pizza from the villas’s outdoor pizza oven. (B, L, D)



Livingston Hotel, Ortigia



Livingston Hotel Lobby

Saturday, September 27

Depart the Masseria for the Bari airport for your late morning flight to Catania, Sicily with a short layover in Rome. Your private driver will meet you in the Catania airport Arrivals Hall and transfer you to The Livingston Hotel on the island of Ortigia. This ancient city was once inhabited by the Greeks. At its peak in the fifth century BC, Ortigia and the main city of Syracuse, briefly eclipsed Athens as the leading city-state of the civilization. The island juts out into the Ionian Sea and is connected to the mainland city of Syracuse by two small bridges. Your hotel sits on the edge of the island with spectacular views of the Ionian Sea. The late afternoon and evening is at your leisure to wander the island and dine at one of the island's fine restaurants with views of the sea, or at a typical Sicilian trattoria on a side street. (B) Hotel Livingston www.hotellivingston.com (4 nights)



Ortigia Market



Temple of Apollo

Sunday, September 28

This morning, enjoy a guided walking tour of Ortigia. With your local guide, you will visit the main historical sites: the Temple of Apollo, Siracusa Cathedral, Piazza Duomo, and the Ortigia Street Market. From the market, you and your friends will join your guide on the terrace of a building in the Piazza. This unique private venue sits at eye level of the Cathedral's steeple with panoramic views of the island and the sea. Here you will enjoy a specially prepared lunch of typical local food and tastings of regional wines. The experience is enhanced by live, traditional Sicilian folk music, creating a classical ambience. After lunch, you can choose to visit the Neapolis Archaeological Park in the city of Syracuse, a short taxi ride away. The Park is home to the most diverse collection of Greek ruins in Sicily, attesting to the city's importance to the Greek, and later Roman, world. The remains in this vast park give you a sense of ancient Syracuse's immensity and power. The evening is at your leisure to enjoy the island's spectacular sunset from the hotel's rooftop garden terrace. (B, L)



Ancient Greek Theater



Piazza IX Aprile

Monday, September 29

Today, you will visit one of Sicily's top destinations. Taormina is a picturesque town perched on the dramatic outcrop of Monte Tauro, in sight of active Mt. Etna, with some of the most beautiful sea views in all of Sicily. Founded by the Greeks in the fourth century BC, who gave Taormina its famous Greek theater, it was taken over by the Romans in the third century AD, who quickly saw its potential as an elite retreat. Like much of Sicily, Taormina was conquered by the Byzantines, Arabs, and eventually the Spanish all of whom left their mark on this small town's architecture. Ovid, Goethe, Oscar Wilde, and many others praised the beauty of Taormina in their writings. It's a perfect town to explore on foot from the Greek Theater to the checkered-tiled central square, Piazza IX Aprile, with your local guide. At the end of the tour, choose from one of the many fine restaurants on or near the Piazza for lunch. Take time for browsing the shops before returning to your hotel. The evening is at your leisure. (B)



Marzamemi



Noto

Tuesday, September 30

Your private driver will pick you up this morning for a full day tour of southwest Sicily. First stop is the Planeta Winery where you will visit the vineyards, the production cellar, and enjoy a tasting of Sicilian wines and extra virgin olive oil. You will also enjoy a lunch of locally grown, farm fresh products. The next stop is a visit to the ancient seaside village of Marzamemi, home of the traditional Tonnara, tuna fishermen. The last stop is a visit to the city of Noto, a UNESCO World Heritage site. With its baroque architecture, the city is surrounded by hills covered with olive, almond, and citrus groves. Noto is Sicily's main almond producing region so be sure to sample some of the region's sweet almond treats. In the evening, gather on the hotel terrace to share food, wine, and memories with good friends on this last evening of our amazing tour. Be prepared to entertain and be entertained at our Grand Finale! (B, L, D)

Wednesday, October 1

Depart Catania for your flight home or on to further adventures! (B)

