



itinerary:
JUNE 3 - 10
2012

sicily itinerary

On our journey we'll explore two areas of Sicily: the Val di Mazara, which is the northwestern corner of the island, and the Val di Noto in the southeast. We'll talk with producers who use traditional methods to help their wines, cheeses, breads, and oils express the essence of their territory. We'll also meet chefs who have such an innate understanding of their tradition that they are able to re-elaborate it – keeping it dynamic and thereby preparing it for a life far into the future. Through the local gastronomy, we'll learn about the culture of Sicily.

In the Val di Mazara our base will be the Foresteria between Menfi and Porto Palo, a small, new hotel with an open kitchen and sea views. In the former Carthaginian stronghold of the Northwest, we'll visit genuine producers, ancient sites, and the exotic cultural capital, Palermo.

Our base in the Val di Noto will be Modica, a lively town with a long and interesting history. From ancient origins to its role as county seat under the Spanish, it is the birthplace of Nobel Prize winning poet Salvatore Quasimodo and the nucleus of traditional pastry and chocolate making. Expect exuberant baroque villages, elaborate pastries, and a tight-knit group of highly creative chefs.

Day 1: Sunday, June 3 (Menfi)

Arrival, Selinunte, Seaside Dinner

We'll arrive at Palermo's airport Punta Raisi at 11:25 a.m., and transfer to our hotel, La Foresteria in Menfi. We'll meet, greet, and have our trip orientation over lunch. In the afternoon we'll visit Selinunte, ancient Greek Selinus – a powerhouse border town which is now amazingly evocative of ancient Greek and Roman life with extant ruins of commercial centers, fortifications, residential neighborhoods, and sacred structures. Our casual dinner will be seaside with a charismatic chef and plate after plate of fresh fish.

Day 2: Monday, June 4 (Menfi)

Palermo, Salt Pans, Marsala Winemakers

Morning in Palermo will find us strolling through the Ballarò, the most uproarious of Palermo's markets, with *ogni ben di Dio* (every gift of God) on display. Delicacies of the season will be on display with their praises lauded, screeched, or sung at full volume by proud and competitive vendors. We'll visit the Norman church of Santa Maria dell'Amiraglio (La Martorana) for a look at Sicily's earliest and most splendid Byzantine mosaic cycle. We'll appreciate the stark beauty of Arabic design at the church of San Cataldo, with its little red domes, tracery windows, and elegantly bare interior. Lunch will be with a local chef who works with spectacular ingredients and has a vast family repertoire of recipes; her husband makes some of the island's most intriguing wines. In the afternoon we'll visit the salt pans between Trapani and Marsala, founded by the mighty Carthaginians who are renowned for their resourcefulness. They fully exploited the sea, sun, and wind to gather salt, one of the most important commodities, and it is gathered using the same, simple techniques today. In nearby vineyards we'll

talk with a courageous, young natural winemaker who bottles cru. His structured whites come from indigenous grape varieties that speak to the history of grape growing in Sicily, the winemaker's philosophy, and their terroir. We'll join our winemaker at his friend's restaurant for elegantly prepared fish and a view of the Egadi Islands. A highly-respected Marsala producer will lead a discussion and tasting of what is perhaps the truest example of Sicily's most famous wine. We'll end our evening tasting the shadows of Sicilian history in one sip of Marsala.

Day 3: Tuesday, June 5 (Menfi)

Fish Auction, Segesta, Cheesemakers, Mazara del Vallo

Early each morning the artisanal fleet of Selinunte returns from sea to the small port. Their catch, still wriggling and fresh from the sea, is divided into one kilo lots and sold to the highest bidding housewife or restaurateur by Carlo the auctioneer who, after a caffè, heads over to his job at the archaeological park. The rest of the day we'll spend in Elymian territory, where fortified villages were settled by Aeneas and friends. Perhaps the most romantic ruins in all of Sicily are the temple and city complex at Segesta, founded by Eggesta, compatriot of Aeneas. Mystery surrounds the Doric temple's true purpose; from the cavea of the theater, which was carved into the rocky mountainside, the view is as dramatic as it should be at any ancient theater worth its salt.

Still on the trail of Aeneas, we'll go even farther into the island's rugged interior to meet and talk with a cheese-making couple who use only their own sheeps' milk to make cheese. We'll watch the magical transformation of milk into cheese and taste la zabbina, ricotta, vastedda and their sharp, aged picurinu sicilianu. At a family-run restaurant we'll have a demonstration of the local specialty – a savory pastry called 'nfrighiulati and a hearty lunch of mountain fare. Late afternoon will find us walking through the medina of Mazara del Vallo to see the Dancing Satyr. This is an original Greek bronze sculpture that was the surprise catch of the fishing boat that hauled it up from the seabed where it lay for millennia after an ancient shipwreck. There we'll taste the delicacies made by the cloistered Benedictine nuns, some of the very last to practice Sicily's centuries-old monastic tradition of pastry making. We'll have dinner at our hotel with the option of watching and talking with the chef as he prepares the meal.

Day 4: Wednesday, June 6 (Modica)

Baker, Transfer to Modica, Tour of Modica, La Gazza Ladra

We'll make an early morning visit to a baker in Campobello di Mazara who uses the same variety of wheat the Romans cultivated at Selinunte to make the typical pane nero, or dark loaves. With bread in hand, we'll embark on our five-hour journey to Modica, where we'll check-in to Talia, our home away from home. Once in Modica, we'll take a Viaggio Sentimentale, a sentimental journey through town with a historian to get an understanding of its complex history. Our sentimental journey will continue through dinner at one of the region's most acclaimed restaurants, playground to one of the sensitively creative chefs who applies mathematical precision to emotive recipes served in an elegant, yet relaxed atmosphere.

Day 5: Thursday, June 7 (Modica)

Olive Oil Producer, Natural Wine Maker, Ragusa Ibla, Pizza

In the morning we'll meet an olive oil producer at Chiamonte Gulfi, learn his production philosophy, visit his groves, and taste the difference between oils extracted from the Tonda Iblea and Moresca cultivars. Our lunch will be in Charamonte Gulfi, where pork reigns supreme. We'll visit another young, explosive winemaker who works the red soils of the family's estate near Vittoria, home territory for Frappato and Nero d'Avola grapes. The earthiness and femininity of her Frappato is nothing less than an homage to Demeter, the fertility goddess whose cult worship was centered in underground spaces with fresh water springs. Damp earth, fresh water, fertility, territoriality, and tradition

are expressed in a glass of this inky, magic liquid. You'll have free time to explore the narrow streets and relaxed piazzas of the baroque wonder of Ragusa Ibla. Our dinner destination is hailed as the best pizzeria in all of Sicily.

Day 6: Friday, June 8 (Modica)

Pastry Demo, Country Lunch Class, Free Time

We'll start our morning with a discussion, demonstration, and tasting of Modica's historic pastries and chocolate which have a direct connection to Christopher Columbus and the Aztecs. Then we'll head out onto the limestone plateau where fields are marked by drystone walls and shaded by carob trees. There we'll forage, eat, learn, and laugh with the locals as we learn to cook recipes typical to the Val di Noto, such as foraged greens, the savory pastry called *scacce*, and fig-filled pastries. Our intrepid travelers will have time to explore Modica and have dinner on your own.

Day 7: Saturday, June 9 (Catania)

Marzamemi, Noto, Pastries, Farewell Dinner

Our last full day in Sicily will find us traveling from Modica to the far southeast coast where the small village of Marzamemi grew up around an ancient tonnara and the 18th century palazzo of the Prince Villadorata. We'll visit a tuna processing facility, learn about the tradition of tuna fishing in Sicily, and taste the products made on site. There will be free time to stroll through the airy piazza (truly the most romantic piazza in all of Italy), and its shops, courtyards and side streets which lead past fishermen's homes directly into the sea. We'll have lunch at a casual restaurant in the piazza where the *ventresca* braised with bay laurel may be the most tender morsel of tuna ever served. Our afternoon visit will be to baroque Noto with its exuberant architecture, successful urban plan, and elaborate pastries. We'll head north to Catania (near the Fontanarossa airport) where our Sicilian adventure will end with a farewell dinner befitting the intriguing culture of the island.

Day 8: Sunday, June 10

Fond Farewells and Departure

Our intrepid travelers will have an early morning departure from Catania's Fontanarossa airport, leaving the island of Sicily with fond memories of this amazing Mediterranean island.

This itinerary is subject to change.

CULINARY EDUCATOR:



Elaine Trigiani hails from Mississippi, but has been living in Italy for ten years (first in Sicily, now in Tuscany) studying olive oil and Sicilian and Florentine culinary traditions from local producers, farmers, home cooks, chefs, and her Sicilian relatives. Elaine is the author of the DK Eyewitness guide *Top 10 Sicily*, and updated Thomas Cook *Travelers Sicily*. She designs and leads culinary travel programs, develops recipes, and teaches olive oil tasting seminars and cooking classes in Italy and the United States. Elaine holds a masters' degree in art history, and is certified as an olive oil taster by the Regione Toscana.

Hotel Websites

Menfi: La Foresteria www.planetaestate.it
Modica: Palazzo Failla www.palazzofailla.it

Main Trip Price

Double occupancy	\$6,000 per person
Single occupancy	\$6,400 per person



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JUNE 10-13

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sicily tour extension

POST-TOUR EXTENSION: SICILY'S NORTHEAST

The terrain and culture of Sicily is so varied that it is a world in itself. The island's triangular shape informed its ancient name, Trinacria, or triangle. Our main trip will cover the Northwest and Southeast corners of the triangle, and the post trip will cover the Northeast corner. We'll spend three days based on Mount. Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe, and enjoy cultural and culinary visits to Catania, the volcano, Taormina, and Messina. Our hotel base will be Shalai in Linguaglossa on the northern slope of the volcano.

Churches, streets, and entire villages are built with blocks of solidified black lava. The earth's magma passes close to the surface and the energy is palpable. Vineyards on narrow terraces sculpted from the slopes of the mountain centuries ago are worked by hand. Vignaioli (grape-growers\winemakers), some of whom are now referred to in the press as cult winemakers or rebels, make wine the way their grandfathers used to, and with no other goal than making as little environmental impact as possible and helping the grapes and soil express themselves poetically. The wines taste of the mineral black soil, and speak to the manpower that went into their creation, the harmony between the earth, mountain, and sky.

Impromptu markets, often just a farmer with a small three-wheeled truck, sell local varieties of seasonal fruits from minute strawberries to flat and floral-tasting tabaccheria peaches. Some of the world's best pistachios are cultivated at Bronte. Chefs hunt mushrooms, wild greens, and fruits, and prepare foraged ingredients spontaneously in outdoor kitchens. The Ionian coast is the domain of fishermen who catch red and violet prawns, swordfish, silvery anchovies, and every swimming creature that populates the sea. Moving north toward Messina with Calabria visible in the middle-ground, the landscape changes as the mountains protect this point of the island from the winds of the Scirocco. Just above the Strait of Messina, ferns thrive and cool air dominates the vineyards where a very few vignaioli produce the deep and fresh Faro red, the latest expression of this terroir which has been lauded for its wines since the ancient Greeks.

Day 1: Sunday, June 10 (Linguaglossa)

Catania, Pescheria, Volcano Dinner

After taking our friends to the airport, we'll make a morning visit to Catania's fish market, where it seems that every creature that swims the seas is represented and shown off proudly by the fisherman who caught it. Lunch will be in the market. In the heart of Catania, where black lava stone is used to dramatic effect, we'll explore the ancient Roman center of town where Agatha, the patron saint of Catania, lived, worshipped, and was martyred in the third century AD. We'll have an afternoon check-in at the Shalai, with relaxation time and spa treatments for those interested. Dinner will be mountainside with a chef known for his use of wild greens and otherwise foraged ingredients.

Day 2: Monday, June 11 (Linguaglossa)

Messina, Winemaker, Taormina

Driving along the Ionian coast and through Interdonato lemon groves, we'll head north to the Strait of Messina. Scilla and Charybdis, the wily singing sea sirens that led Ulysses and his men astray, are immortalized by villages on the facing coasts. Scilla is on the Italian mainland while Charybdis is on Sicily, at Punto Faro just above Messina. There on fern-covered slopes above the Strait, the third in the triumvirate of young, courageous winemakers coaxes out a fresh though serious red, and a sunny yet complex rosato. We'll have lunch in the city with the winemaker and his friend who is a Messinese home style cook. There will be free time in the late afternoon to explore Taormina, with its Greek theater and famous views, before an impressive tasting dinner with Elaine's friend, a charismatic ambassador for small producers.

Day 3: Tuesday, June 12 (Linguaglossa)

Mt. Etna, Santa Venerina, Farewell Dinner

Our excursion will take us up towards the crater of Mount Etna, as far as the volcanologists will let us go, based on volcanic activity and seismograph readings. Lunch will be at a family restaurant amid the sciare (lava flows), and we'll sit out back where grandma mans the grill. You have to love any place where they made Venus a saint, and that's what they did at Santa Venerina, our afternoon stop. We'll taste pastries sweetened with mosto cotto, made from the juice of grapes reduced until sticky, another of the volcanic vineyards' by-products. Then it will be time to pack, have a caffè in Linguaglossa, or a spa treatment before our farewell dinner at the hotel.

Day 4: Wednesday, June 13

Departure will be from Catania's airport Fontanarossa, a one-hour transfer from Linguaglossa.

This itinerary is subject to change.

Hotel Website

Linguaglossa: Shalai www.shalai.it

Post-tour Price

Double occupancy \$1,900 per person

Single occupancy \$2,200 per person



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sicily registration

Dear Traveler,

Thank you for your interest in our upcoming Viking Life travel program to Sicily. We are delighted to share with you the specifics of the trip, along with the expenses and details for final registration. The trip costs \$6,000 per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a private room throughout the trip, the single occupancy rate is \$6,400.

Please complete the registration form below and return it to us with your deposit. Space is limited, as this is a small group trip (maximum 10 people), so I encourage you to register and return the form by fax, email, or mail as soon as possible. If you are traveling with a partner, please make sure that both of you sign and return the waiver form found on the last page of the registration form.

Viking Life Travel Program
Att: Bridget Engle
1107 Highland Colony Parkway, Suite 203
Ridgeland, Mississippi 39157
601-506-6821 phone, 601-898-7762 fax

Once you have completed the final registration process and we are in receipt of your deposit, we will mail additional information to you. If you have any questions, please contact me at 601-506-6821 or via email at bengle@vikingrange.com. I look forward to speaking with you in the coming weeks as we prepare for this exciting culinary adventure.

Sincerely,

Bridget Engle
Viking Life Travel Program Director



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sicily registration

Please fax, email, or mail registration form to Bridget Engle.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Company/Organization: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone/Home: _____ Phone/Cell: _____

Phone/Business: _____ Fax: _____

Allergies, Dietary Restrictions, or Medical Problems: _____

Male Female

1. Are you a culinary professional or a culinary enthusiast? _____

2. What is your culinary background or interest and expertise? _____

3. How did you hear about our travel program? _____

4. How many trips do you take per year? _____

5. What other countries are you interested in traveling to with us? _____

NOTE: IF YOU HAVE ANY MEDICAL PROBLEMS OR DIETARY RESTRICTIONS, THIS MUST BE DISCUSSED IN ADVANCE.

Price Includes

Expert leadership, local ground transportation according to the itinerary, accommodations in hotels as indicated or in a similar category, all meals and tastings as indicated, taxes on hotels and meals as indicated, culinary and cultural visits as indicated.

Price Does Not Include

International airfare, optional excursions, passport fees, international departure taxes and fees, and items of a personal nature, such as gratuities, special diets, alcoholic beverages (other than those as part of a class or demonstration), spa treatments, laundry or ironing services, baggage charges, etc., and any charges in excess of those covered by this travel package.

Prices and Rooming Information

- Price per person based on double occupancy \$6,000
- Price per person based on single occupancy \$6,400
(*\$400 single supplement for a private room*)

Deposits and Payment Information

Please check the amount you are enclosing. A deposit of **50% of the total price** per person is required.

A reservation will not be considered confirmed until we receive the deposit.

- Deposit (double occupancy) \$ _____
- Deposit (single occupancy) \$ _____

Enclosed is a check made payable to Viking Culinary Group with a deposit of \$ _____

Please charge \$ _____ to the following credit card:

American Express MasterCard Visa

Cardholder's Name: _____

Account Number: _____

Three-digit Security V-code: _____

Signature: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Your credit card will be charged within three days of your registration.

Additional Payment Information

Following the initial deposit, your outstanding balance is due no later than March 30, 2012. If payment is not received accordingly, we will consider your reservation cancelled. You may pre-pay the entire balance at any time. Your credit card will be charged for the final balance on March 30, 2012, unless we hear from you.

Cancellations

All cancellations, regardless of reason, must be done in writing. The following fees will apply in the event of cancellation:

DEADLINE	FEE
From time of the reservation until 60 days prior to departure	50% of deposit
90 days prior to departure	50% of trip cost
60 days or less prior to departure	100% of trip cost (no refund available)

Cancellation fees may be waived in the event that a replacement is found for your trip space(s).

Viking reserves the right to cancel any trip due to inadequate sign-up. In such cases, a full refund of the trip will be provided, but Viking is not responsible for additional expenses incurred by participants preparing for the trip. Viking will notify trip participants at least 45 days in advance of a trip if it will be cancelled because of low enrollment.

Statement of Responsibility and Liability

By enrolling in this trip, you agree that the officers, directors, employees, affiliates, and/or representatives of Viking are not responsible nor liable for accidents, loss, damage, death, delay, or expense arising from acts of God, terrorism, wars, strikes, quarantine, weather irregularity, equipment failures, vehicle accidents, government restrictions or regulations, and changes in hotel accommodations or services over which they have no control, nor are they responsible for illness from food or otherwise, detention, assaults, theft or criminal activity, or annoyance.

As the full responsibility of operation of the vehicles used for these arrangements rest with the companies or persons engaged in conveying passengers, and said companies or persons are governed by applicable U.S. Federal, State, Foreign, or International laws, as the case may be, as well as any regulation of companies of the operations themselves, recourse for any delay, injury, cancellations, mishap, loss, damage or death must be sought in the proper venue and jurisdiction where such mishap, damage, loss, or death may have occurred. Should changes to an itinerary be necessary due to circumstances beyond the control of Viking, we reserve the right to make such changes without prior notice. Trip participants agree to hold Viking harmless from any loss or damage, destruction, injury, delay, or any expense arising from same.

Rates quoted are based on current tariffs and exchange rates at the time of printing, and are subject to change without advance notice.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____