

# Secrets of Sicily

## Hotel-to-hotel independent cycling

- Scenic pedalling in undiscovered western Sicily; coastal tracks, citrus scented trails, swaying vines, glistening salt pans
- Archaeological treasures, secluded coves, tranquil hamlets
- Hotels full of character – all with pools; traditional Sicilian cuisine
- Explore medieval Erice, Phoenician Mozia and Greek Segesta
- Possible day trips to the gorgeous Egadi Islands



This independent 8-night linear cycling holiday explores Sicily's unspoiled western coast. Steeped in ancient history and culture, combined with a quintessential Mediterranean landscape of golden bays lapped by azure waters, vine studded countryside dotted with silvery olive groves and tiny sun-baked hamlets where time moves at a lazy pace, the region is ideal for gentle discovery on two wheels. Distances are fairly long, with a few short climbs rewarded by exhilarating downhill spins! We've put this tour together with our local agent, so you'll have full support in Sicily during your stay.

Your holiday begins in medieval Scopello, a tiny cobbled hamlet superbly located above the idyllic Zingaro nature reserve, home to Bonelli's eagles, falcons and buzzards, as well as perfect swimming coves. You then move inland to Buseto Palizzolo, visiting en-route the stunning ancient Greek city of Segesta nestled in pristine countryside, before returning to the sea at Nubia. Here ancient windmills and mounds of freshly harvested sea salt glisten against a backdrop of sapphire waters, with the rugged Egadi islands silhouetted on the horizon. Finally you pedal towards Marsala, renowned for its sweet dessert wine, with time to explore the Phoenician island of Mozia along the way.

Superb hotels are a highlight throughout; all are traditional Sicilian farmhouse (*baglio*) style, with rooms built around a central courtyard and each has an enticing swimming pool (usually open late May-September).



## SECRETS OF SICILY | DAY BY DAY

### Saturday Arrive in Scopello

We meet you at Palermo airport and take you to your hotel (40 mins) spectacularly situated above Castellamare del Golfo.

### Sunday At Scopello

Maybe spend the day discovering the pristine Zingaro nature reserve on foot, with miles of coastal tracks and perfect coves lapped by sapphire waters. Leave time in the early evening for a pre-dinner *aperitivo* in the tiny Moorish village of Scopello - it's a gorgeous jumble of cobbled lanes and alleys radiating off the central square - fantastic sea views too!

### Monday Scopello to Buseto Palizzolo 43km/27mi or 46km/29mi

Gentle pedalling along pine-scented roads dotted with pink bougainvillea before an exhilarating spin to Castellamare del Golfo. Leaving the sea behind, you cycle inland climbing through an enchanting landscape of swaying vines, palms and citrus groves to reach Segesta with its stunningly preserved 2,500 year old Doric temple with breathtaking sea views. Then onto Signor Di Vito's lovely farmhouse hotel; time for a drink on the rooftop terrace before dinner.

### Tuesday At Buseto Palizzolo

Almonds, olives and oranges are farmed by our hotelier in this wonderfully warm climate and the oils are used for massages at the hotel - a perfect excuse to ease any aching muscles! Nearby is the Monte Cofano Nature Reserve, a towering limestone mass with a vaguely African landscape, dotted with fig, carob and lentisk trees. Here you'll find the *Grotta Mangiapane* - an incredible cave containing a rural hamlet complete with chapel and cobbled street - as well as a lovely beach at Custonaci.

### Wednesday Buseto Palizzolo to Nubia 34km/21mi

As you climb gently out of Buseto, you are rewarded with breathtaking views of the three Egadi islands as they glimmer on the horizon. It's then downhill virtually all day passing through a string of tranquil hamlets before reaching a beautiful flat stretch next to the sea, lined with sparkling mounds of salt and crumbling windmills - perhaps you'll spot flamingos bathing vividly in the warm waters - which leads to our stunning ★★★★★ *baglio*.

### Thursday At Nubia

Medieval Erice is easily visited - its cobbled narrow streets seem to cling to the hillside and amazing balcony views sweep across to the Mediterranean and Trapani. Maybe visit the 12C Norman castle, dedicated to Venus or enjoy an icy *granita*, flavoured with fresh lemons or mint, in the bustling *piazza*. For a lazier day, our hotel has a gorgeous pool nestling in verdant vines.

### Friday Nubia to Marsala 46km/29mi

First pedalling inland through a delicately perfumed landscape of melon groves, vines and palm dates before reaching the coast again. Maybe savour a fresh fish lunch *al fresco* in the salty sharp air before taking a wooden boat to fascinating Mozia - ruins of a strategic Phoenician settlement dating back to 1300 BC on San Pantaleo island. It's then an easy cycle along the seafront to reach Marsala - time to try the eponymous sweet wine before dinner!

### Saturday At Marsala

Favignana, the largest (and flattest!) of the Egadi islands, is just a short ferry hop away. A cyclist's paradise with pine-scented tranquil lanes leading to secret coves and archaeological ruins - lots of choice for lunch in the bustling harbour-side town. Plenty to discover in Marsala too; the historic center has a colorful market and butter coloured Baroque churches.

### Sunday Leave Sicily

We take you to the airport (75 mins) in time for your return flight - or how about spending a couple of nights in lively Palermo? We can easily arrange it for you.

*Note: Please note that, from spring 2011, cycling helmets are compulsory in Italy for children under 16. As we cannot provide these, we strongly recommend that you bring your own.*



*"A very enjoyable holiday and great group of fellow cyclists."*

*Mr P Cowell*

## Dates and Prices

Departs selected Saturdays	Tour Only
<b>2012 departures</b>	
Apr 14, 21, Oct 13	\$2,998
May 5, 12, 19, 26, Sep 29, Oct 6	\$2,998
Apr 7, 28, Sep 22	\$3,028
Jun 2, 9, Sep 1, 8, 15	\$3,028

**Singles:** Add \$53 per night for sole occupancy of a double room. Solo traveler supplement is an additional \$585.

**Child:** This holiday is unsuitable for children under 12.

**Room upgrade:** Prices from \$94 per person, per night, based on 2 sharing.

**Holiday type:** Independent cycling, hotel-to-hotel, no minimum group size, however airport and luggage transfers are subject to at least 2 people (in total) booked on each departure.

**Departs:** Selected Saturdays from Apr 7 to Oct 13.

**Duration:** 9 days (8 nights).

**Meals:** Continental breakfast and evening meals.

**Other details:** For "What your holiday price includes," see "Holiday Planning" section pp 48-51.

## Tailor-made travel choices

### Nearest Arrival Airport: Palermo Airport

Flights can be arranged from most US/CANADA airports, with connecting transfers as required, prices and details on request.

**The above prices include our standard transfers:** Palermo Airport at 16:15 (transfer to the hotel, 40 mins, provided). **Return:** Palermo Airport by 12:20 (transfer provided).

**Tour only:** Transfers included from Palermo airport at 16:15, and back to Palermo airport departing hotel at 11:00.

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## SECRETS OF SICILY | WHERE YOU STAY



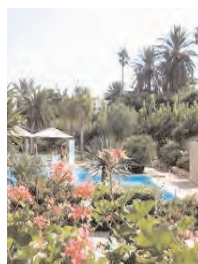
**Tenute Plaia Agriturismo**  
★★★★  
Scopello  
Days 1+2



**Baglio Fontana**  
★★★★  
Buseto Palizzolo  
Days 3+4



**Relais Antiche Saline**  
★★★★  
Nubia  
Days 5+6



**Villa Favorita**  
★★★★  
Marsala  
Days 7+8

For extra nights we recommend Scopello and Nubia, and city add-ons can be arranged in Palermo.