

Islands of Sicily

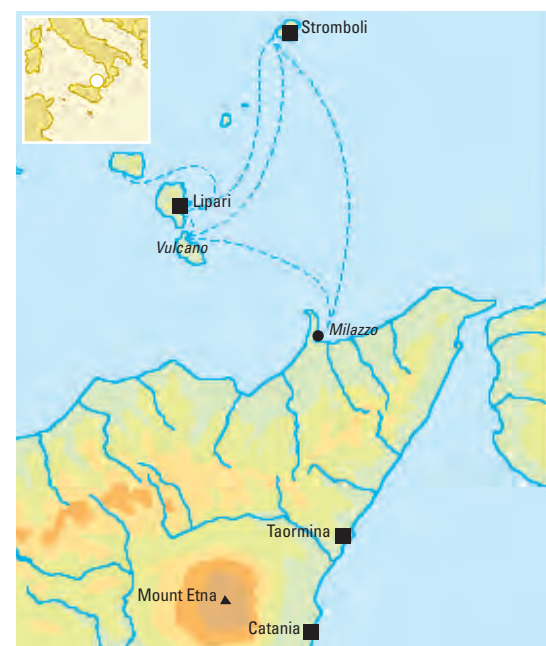
Hotel-to-hotel   independent walking

- Taormina – “Pearl of the Ionian Coast” – and awesome Mount Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe
- Extremely varied landscapes of the Aeolian Islands, each a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2000
- Panoramic coastal footpaths; dramatic lava trails; natural bubbling mud baths; lots of island-hopping opportunities
- Sulphurous smouldering green craters, molten red lava skies, black sand beaches, secluded bays for swimming
- Wonderfully varied hotels – two with pools – run by proud and passionate people



This 9-night walking holiday leads you on an independent adventure along Sicily's stunning eastern coast, taking in some of the islands' most precious jewels: from the spectacular Greek Theatre of Taormina to the immense and impressive Mount Etna - the largest active volcano in Europe! You'll also spend 5 days island hopping between the astonishingly beautiful Aeolian Islands – a string of seven volcanic islets that glimmer like black pearls off Sicily's Mediterranean shoreline. You'll stay 3 nights on Lipari - the largest island of the Aeolian Archipelago - and 2 nights on the island of Stromboli, known also as the 'Lighthouse of the Mediterranean' for its constant volcanic eruptions.

The walks themselves are as varied as the places you'll visit. Highlights include climbing Vulcano's *Gran Cratere della Fossa* crater to see the *fumaroles* a steady stream of gases and vapours that eerily seep out of the ground and, in Stromboli, there's a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a nocturnal ascent, with a volcanologist, towards the summit to witness the flow of lava and intermittent explosions that paint the night in a glorious red light. Your final day is spent on Mount Etna itself. Setting off at 1,900m you walk up through an impressive volcanic landscape towards the summit, enjoying infinite views down to Catania and the crystal-clear waters of the Ionian Sea.



ISLANDS OF SICILY | DAY BY DAY

Day 1 Arrive in Catania

We meet you at Catania airport and take you to our comfortable ★★★ hotel in the historic center.

Day 2 Catania to Lipari

After your welcome briefing, it's a private transfer to Milazzo harbour to catch the hydrofoil (50 mins) to Lipari, capital of the Aeolian Islands. The afternoon is at leisure to explore Lipari old town and harbour.

Day 3 At Lipari 10km/6.5mi/4hr

A short bus ride takes you up to the village of Quattropiani, on Lipari's western coast and the start of today's walk. Enjoy breathtaking views over the entire archipelago from Lipari's verdant peaks as you descend to its bustling harbour.

Day 4 At Vulcano 7km/4.7mi/3hr

A 10-min hydrofoil takes you to the neighbouring island of Vulcano, famous for its black beaches and volcanic mud baths. Walk up to the *Gran Cratere della Fossa* crater for beautiful views over the other islands before descending back down to the beach in time for lunch and – optional! - mud bath.

Day 5 Lipari to Stromboli

Down to the port to hop across on the hydrofoil (90 mins) to Stromboli – considered one of the most beautiful islands of the Mediterranean, with its cone-shaped volcano and black beaches contrasting with white houses splashed with scarlet bougainvillea. The afternoon is at leisure to explore the island, with the option to join a guided sunset hike (pay locally) to the summit of the volcanic crater – an amazing experience!

Day 6 At Stromboli 8km/4.8mi/4hr

A circular walk that takes you to Sciarra del Fuoco - a viewpoint overlooking an incredibly steep landslide where rocks spurted out from the crater roll directly down into the sea. In the afternoon there's time to visit the lovely village of San Vincenzo or have a swim in the sea.

Day 7 Stromboli to Taormina

After taking the hydrofoil back to Milazzo you will be transferred to Taormina (1hr), the jewel in Sicily's crown. Time to lap up the atmosphere and explore this charming historic town and to admire the amazing view of mighty Mount Etna.

Day 8 At Taormina 4km/3mi/3hr

A morning walk up to mediaeval Castelmola - perched precariously above Taormina, it is one of the most beautiful villages in Italy. Free time for visiting historic Taormina and its Greek theatre, or bathing in the blue sea of the natural reserve of Isola Bella.

Day 9 At Mount Etna 8km/5mi/4hr

A private transfer on to Etna's southern flank (1900m) to discover the massive ridge of the Bove Valley - a huge *caldera* formed by a volcanic collapse, with amazing views down to the Ionian coastline and Catania. Alternatively, ascend by cable car and jeep to 2900m and then walk to Etna's summit (3350m) to discover the line of craters that opened during the 2002 eruption (guided tour only, pay locally). We then take you back to Taormina for your final night.

Day 10 Leave Catania



Dates and Prices

Departs selected Sundays

Tour Only	2012 departures
\$2,994	Apr 15, 22, May 13, 20
\$2,994	Oct 7, 14, 21
\$2,994	Apr 1, 8, 29, May 6, Sep 30
\$3,086	May 27, Jun 3, 10, 17
\$3,119	Sep 9, 16, 23

Singles: Add \$62 per night for sole occupancy of a double room. Solo traveler supplement is an additional \$87 per night.

Child: This holiday is unsuitable for children under 12.

Room upgrade: Prices from \$60 per person, per night based on 2 sharing.

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

Departs: Selected Sundays from Apr 1 to Oct 21.

Duration: 10 days (9 nights).

Meals: Continental breakfast and 3 evening meals.

Other details: You should allow approximately €140/\$200 per person for the use of local hydrofoils, cable cars, optional guided tours, buses and entrance fees. You should also note that you will need to carry your own bags on/off ferries as you travel between the islands. For "What your holiday price includes," see "Holiday Planning" section pp 48-51.

Tailor-made travel choices

Nearest Arrival Airport: Catania 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: Catania Airport at 20:00, (transfer to hotel, 20 mins, provided). **Return:** Catania Airport by 18:45.

Tour only: Transfers included from Catania airport at 20:00, and back to Catania airport departing hotel at 17:45.

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ISLANDS OF SICILY | WHERE YOU STAY



Hotel Agathae

★★★

Catania Day 1



Hotel Giardino Sul Mare

★★★

Lipari Days 2+3+4



Hotel Ossidiana

★★★

Stromboli Days 5+6



Hotel del Corso

★★★

Taormina Days 7+8+9

For extra nights we recommend Taormina and Catania.

ISLANDS OF SICILY | WALKING DETAILS



This holiday follows mule tracks, stony coastal roads and footpaths through a volcanic landscape of dried lava rock and sand. Due to the frequent, often stony, ascents/descents these walks are more challenging than the distances might suggest. Walking boots are essential, and poles useful.



Average daytime temperature (°C):

16 19 23 24 20
APR MAY JUN SEP OCT



Average monthly rainfall (mm):

47 22 11 37 84
APR MAY JUN SEP OCT