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From
£5,233 GBP

Single Room
£5,839 GBP
Twin Room
£5,233 GBP

Prices valid until
30th December 2024

12 days
Duration

Italy, Malta
Destination

Level 3 - Moderate to Challenging
Activity

Malta & Sicily – Mediterranean Islands small group tour

Apr 22 2024 to May 03 2024



Mediterranean Islands small group tour to Malta and Sicily

Odyssey's Mediterranean islands small group tour of Malta & Sicily is the short tour of this longer program. Our guides lead you on a ten day tour through the region's culture and history. This fully escorted tour for seniors takes you on a fabulous journey around the Western Mediterranean.

The History of Sicily and Malta

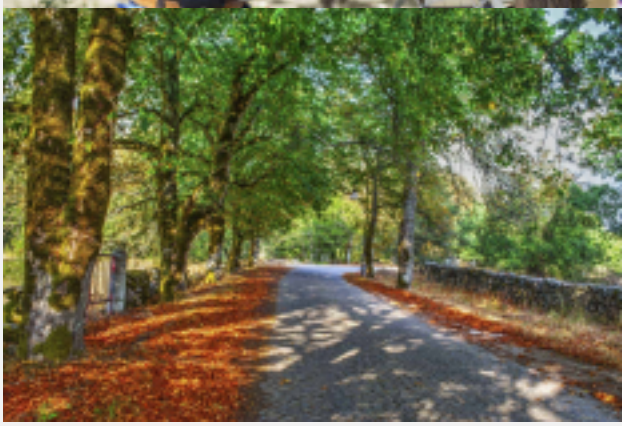
These two unique islands have long held the keys to the Mediterranean. Over centuries, the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Arabs, Normans, Spanish and French imprinted their distinct history and architecture on the landscape of the islands, making the islands a perfect mix of cultures. From 1530 to 1798, Malta was ruled as a vassal state of Sicily by the Knights of St John. In the 19th century, Malta secured the Mediterranean for Britain and helped make it the world's major maritime power. Possession of Sicily brought similar benefits to Rome, as did Corsica for France.

Today, Sicily is an autonomous region of Italy, while Malta is one of the more recent independent members of the European Union. Today, however, their inhabitants still retain their own distinctive characteristics and ways of life. Each island visited has its own character, shaped by its history. Odyssey's small group educational tour compares and contrasts the culture, history, geography and peoples of these two unique islands.

Discover more about the islands of the Mediterranean with our blog post.







Malta & Sicily Small group tour itinerary

Throughout our guided tour you'll experience a number of cultural and historical highlights, from archaeological sites to idyllic resort towns. Odyssey's small group tour of these Western Mediterranean islands is a magnificent holiday for those who wish to learn. Odyssey caters to mature travelers, whether couples or those journeying solo. The tour is fully escorted by an Odyssey Program Leader and a local guide who shares their expert knowledge of the history and culture of these wonderful islands.

Malta

On Malta, we make a walking tour of Malta's medieval history on a trip to the UNESCO World Heritage listed capital city, Valletta, where we visit the Grandmaster's Palace and St. John's Cathedral. We also visit

the city of Rabat, where we visit the grotto of St. Paul. According to Christian tradition, St. Paul lived and preached in these catacombs during three months in Malta in 60 AD. Following Rabat, we head to the walled city of Mdina. Our trip to Malta also includes an excursion to Gozo, the second largest of the islands of Malta, where we visit the megalithic temples of Xaghra, an important prehistoric heritage site. We also make the time to take in Malta's beautiful sandy beaches, including a number of walks along the shore.

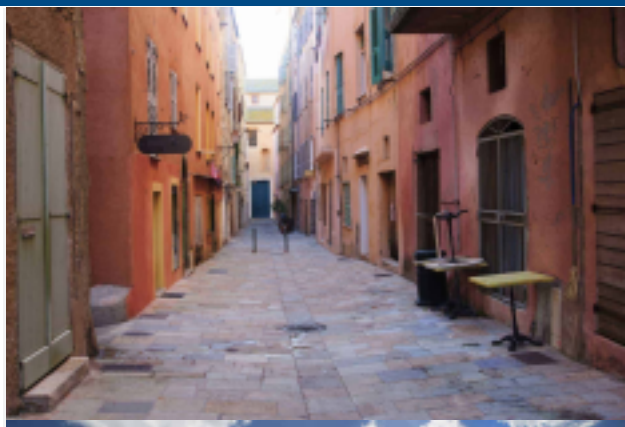
We then get the ferry to Sicily.

Sicily

Our tour of Sicily begins with a walking tour of Noto, recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its grand baroque architecture. We then explore Siracusa (Syracuse), home to ancient Greek ruins and a well-preserved Roman amphitheater. For more ancient archaeological ruins, we then visit Agrigento, home to Greek temples. We also visit the Sicilian capital, Palermo, where we make a stop at the Arab-Norman Cappella Palatina (Palatine Chapel), before making a daytrip to the famous cathedral of Monreale. Finally, we travel to Trapani, where we stay in a hotel for two nights. The streets of this medieval town by the sea remain largely untouched from the period of Arab and Norman rule. From Trapani, we make a day trip to the island of Mozia for an archaeological tour, and then head to Marsala for a wine tasting of its famous drop.

Our tours aim to immerse you in local culture. Sicily and Malta are home to one of the world's richest food cultures, with subtle differences between the two cuisines. In order to experience the cuisine of both places, we always enjoy breakfast, lunch, or dinner at a local restaurant.

You can learn about Malta and Sicily (Italy) with our country profiles. For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.







Articles about Malta and Sicily published by Odyssey Traveller:

- Malta: Megalithic temples, ‘fat ladies’, and the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum.
- About Malta, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica.
- Mediterranean Islands: Malta, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica.
- The Sicilians and their Kings
- Early History of Sicily: From the Phoenicians to the Arab Conquest (800 BC to the 10th Century)
- Empires Crossing the Mediterranean: 1130-1300
- Life of Caravaggio.
- Caravaggio: Ten Books to Read
- Learning about Caravaggio’s Paintings
- as well as more articles on Italy here

For all the articles Odyssey Traveller has published for mature aged and senior travellers, click through on this link.







External articles to assist you on your visit to Malta and Sicily

- Discover Italy – Sicily
- Sicily’s best beaches: warm waters and stunning scenery
- 48 Hours in Sicily
- Why Noto, Sicily is our Italy destination of the summer
- A Local’s Guide to Palermo
- Lonely Planet: Malta

- The Guardian: Valetta on View – the Maltese capital shows off its cultural side
- History of the Knights of St. John
- Megalithic Temples of Malta

Tour Notes

Group size is limited to a maximum of 18 participants.

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Highlights

1. Visit UNESCO World Heritage sites on Malta: Valletta, built by the Knights of St John Hospitaller; and the megalithic temples
2. In Sicily, see the mosaics at the Villa Romana del Casale, the magnificent Baroque town of Noto, and Arab/Norman Palermo
3. Enjoy wonderful scenery and local food and wine throughout all the islands
4. Explore the UNESCO world heritage town of Noto, the finest Baroque town in Sicily
5. Take a ferry to Mozia island and visit its main archaeological sites

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Malta

Overview:

We will host a welcome drinks in the hotel, where the tour leader will introduce the group and take any questions. After the meeting we will

take a short evening walk to a local restaurant for dinner. (D)

Accommodation:

La Falconeria or similar

Day 2

Locations: Malta

Overview:

In the morning we set off for a tour of the main sites around our hotel, commencing at Paola, home of the enigmatic Tarxien Temples. We will also visit Birzebugga, to visit the prehistoric Ghar Dalam cave. Next we will move on to the picturesque Marsaxlokk, famous for its market, to Marsakala where we stop to have lunch.

In the afternoon we transfer to Three Cities, where we have some free time to explore or perhaps take a cruise along the shore (not included, paid locally, approx. EUR 20 per person). We will transfer back to the hotel in the later afternoon. (B,L)

Accommodation:

Waterfront Hotel or similar

Day 3

Locations: Malta

Overview:

Today's activities centre around Valletta, the capital of Malta. We visit the Upper Barakka Gardens, the Grandmaster's Palace, St. John's Co-Cathedral, and the Museum of Archaeology. In the late afternoon we take in the 'Malta Experience', an audio-visual attraction set in a purpose-built auditorium overlooking Valletta's magnificent Grand Harbour.

We return to our hotel for a short rest and later take an evening walk to a local restaurant for dinner. (B,D)

Accommodation:

Waterfront Hotel or similar

Day 4

Locations: Malta

Overview:

This morning we begin our tour of Malta with a talk on its various islands and their history. We'll learn about Malta's natural and cultural heritage, strategic Mediterranean importance, centuries-old fortifications, settlements, and religious sites. Typical of the islands of the Mediterranean, Malta has played host to waves of several great civilisations including the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, and the Spanish. The Knights of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, also known as the Knights of St John, were Malta's Masters from 1530 to 1798, when Napoleon's French forces invaded. Then, in 1800, the British assumed control until Malta was granted independence in 1964. The island and its people were awarded the George Cross for their bravery during World War II.

We then enjoy a full-day tour of local sites, starting with the ancient fortified city of Mdina where we enjoy a walking tour and stop to viire the Cathedral. We than continue to Ta'Qali craft village with some free time to shop for souvenirs. We visit Mosta to see the Mosta Rotunda, then travel to Rabat for lunch at a local restaurant.

In the afternoon we explore St. Paul's Church and Grotto, and St. Paul's Catacombs, then make our way back to our hotel and the remainder of the day is at leisure. (B,L)

Accommodation:

Waterfront Hotel or similar

Day 5

Locations: Malta

Overview:

This morning we'll take a morning ferry ride across to Gozo, Malta's second largest island, where we have a full day island tour. We visit the citadel at Victoria and the coastal village of Xlendi, which is still guarded over by a 17th century tower built by the Knights of St John. Following lunch, we will travel up the western coast of Gozo to visit Dwejra. Here we will take a boat ride to Fungus Rock, then on to the Ta Pinu basilica

in Gharb, followed by a tour of the megalithic Ggantija Temples in Xaghra. In the evening we'll return via ferry and coach to our hotel. We have dinner at our hotel this evening. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

Waterfront Hotel or similar

Day 6

Locations: Syracuse, Sicily

Overview:

This morning begins with an early morning ferry across to Pozzallo in Sicily. Here we join our coach and continue to the UNESCO world heritage town of Noto, the finest Baroque town in Sicily, home to sights like the San Francesco Church, Monastery of Santa Chiara and Palazzo Ducezio. We have free time for lunch, and continue on to Syracuse.

The remainder of the day in Syracuse is free to relax or explore on your own until we meet as a group again for dinner at the hotel. (B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Mercure Siracusa Prometeo or similar

Day 7

Locations: Syracuse, Sicily

Overview:

Today we enjoy a half day tour of Syracuse, where a visit to the Neapolis Archaeological Park will be followed by a trip to Ara di Ierone, the Great Altar of Syracuse, a monumental grand altar in the ancient quarter of Neapolis.

There will be some free time in the afternoon before we meet a local expert for a talk on the History and Culture of Sicily.

In the evening we attend a traditional "puppet theatre" (Opera dei Pupi – Sicilian marionette show) and then return to our hotel. (B)

Accommodation:

Hotel Mercure Siracusa Prometeo or similar

Day 8

Locations: Agrigento, Sicily

Overview:

Today we depart to to Agrigento with a stop in Caltagirone along the way.

We spend some time exploring Caltagirone with our local guide where we view the Staircase of Santa Maria del Monte and visit the Museum of Ceramics. We will enjoy some free time for lunch and then we stop for a visit to Piazza Armerina and see its famous mosaics during our guided tour of the Villa Romana del Casale.

Later we transfer to our hotel and the evening is free to explore the town on your own. (B)

Accommodation:

Overnight at the Colloverde Park Hotel or similar

Day 9

Locations: Trapani, Sicily

Overview:

In the morning we tour Agrigento and visit the Valley of the Temples, one of the most outstanding examples of Greater Greece art and architecture.

We then depart towards Trapani, with a stop in Segesta, an archaeological site outside Palermo, where we'll take a guided tour to see the Doric Temple and ancient theatre.

We arrive in Trapani later in the afternoon and the remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. Dinner this evening is at a local restaurant. (B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Room of Andrea or similar

Day 10

Locations: Trapani, Sicily

Overview:

This morning we'll enjoy a walking tour of Trapani to view its main attractions, we'll then transfer to San Leonardo for a ferry trip across to the island of Mozia. We'll visit the main archaeological sites here, including the Whitaker Museum. We then return to San Leonardo for lunch at a local restaurant.

In the afternoon we visit Marsala, home of the fortified wine that bears the town's name, followed by a stop at Erice to take the funicular to the medieval eyrie of Erice, to enjoy its sweeping views of the valley and sea.

We then transfer back to our hotel for the evening. (B,L)

Accommodation:

Hotel Room of Andrea or similar

Day 11

Locations: Palermo, Sicily

Overview:

This morning we transfer to Monreale, to visit its cloistered Cathedral followed by Palermo, Sicily's capital where we overnight.

In Palermo we visit Quattro Canti, the "Theatre of the Sun", and La Martorana, the city's most famous medieval church, visit Palazzo dei Normanni and Cappella Palatina and then take a guided tour of Teatro Massimo, Palermo's magnificent Opera House.

Dinner this evening is at our hotel. (B,D)

Accommodation:

Overnight at Hotel Frederico II or similar

Day 12

Locations: Palermo, Sicily

Overview:

The tour concludes this morning after breakfast. (B)

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 11 nights accommodation.
- 11 breakfasts, 4 lunches, and 6 dinners.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides.
- Transport and field trips as indicated.
- Touring by comfortable and modern coach.
- Ferry services.
- Service charges and gratuities.
- Detailed tour information booklet.
- Services of an Odyssey tour leader.

What's not included in our Tour

- Return international airfare and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive international travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature, such as telephone calls and laundry.
- Meals not specified in the itinerary.

Level 3 - Moderate to Challenging

Participants must be in excellent health, extremely mobile and live an active lifestyle. Program activities may include up to 6 hours of continuous strenuous, moderate to fast paced activity per day over varied terrain.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.