



From
\$20,296 NZD

Single Room
 \$22,461 NZD

Twin Room
 \$20,296 NZD

Prices valid until
 30th December 2023

25 days
 Duration

Corsica, Italy
 Destination

Level 2 - Moderate
 Activity

Mediterranean Islands Small Group Tour | Malta, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica

Sep 06 2023 to Sep 30 2023

Mediterranean Islands small group tour.

Odyssey offers easy, convenient, and relaxed escorted small group tours across the Mediterranean islands and beyond. We explore 's the Mediterranean natural beauty, its ancient Roman, and Imperial heritage, its World Heritage Sites, and world famous cities, all with



some truly spectacular scenery along the way. This and more is all waiting to be explored on one of Odyssey's small group tours of the Islands of Mediterranean, designed for the senior traveller, and led by experienced, and enthusiastic like minded people.

Odyssey's Mediterranean islands small group tour of Malta, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica guides you through the region's culture and fascinating history. This fully escorted, 25 day, small group tour for seniors takes you on a fabulous journey around the Western Mediterranean. Beginning in Malta, our escorted tours head to Sicily, Sardinia, before finishing in Corsica, offering extraordinary insights into the history and culture of these Western Mediterranean Islands.

Malta, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica:

For centuries these four unique islands held the keys to the Mediterranean and in particular they were important for trading within the Mediterranean sea. and you can learn more in this article on Malta, Sicily, Sardinia & Corsica. Over centuries, the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Arabs, Normans, Spanish and French imprinted their distinct culture and architecture on the landscape of the islands. 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 and Sardinia are both very different autonomous regions of Italy. Corsica is a rather reluctant part of France, and 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.

Itinerary of our Mediterranean Island tour

Each of the four islands 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 four unique islands. Throughout the tour you'll experience a number of cultural and historical highlights, from prehistoric settlements to idyllic

resort towns.

Malta

Our tour spends five days in Malta and Gozo. Here we visit the city of Rabat, where we explore the grotto of St. Paul and investigate the stories about the antiquities referred to as the two fat ladies. According to Christian tradition, St. Paul lived and preached in these catacombs during three months in Malta in 60 AD. More recently, Malta was ruled by the Knights of St John as a vassal of Sicily. One of the famous knights of St John was the painter Caravaggio. The capital city, Valletta is UNESCO World Heritage listed as a testament to their influence. On a walking tour, we see the Grandmaster's Palace and the Cathedral of St. John. On our last day in Malta, we take a ferry trip to Gozo, the largest of the islands of Malta. Gozo is home to the megalithic Ggantija temples of Xaghra, which are an important prehistoric heritage site.

Sicily

We then depart for Sicily. Our tour of Sicily begins with a walking tour of Noto, recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its grand baroque architecture. While in Sicily we also learn about Sicilian people and their Kings. We then explore Syracuse, home to ancient Greek ruins and a well-preserved Roman ruins. For more archaeological sites relating to the early history of Sicily, 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, before making a daytrip to the famous cathedral of Monreale. Finally, we travel to Trapani, where we stay for two nights in a hotel. 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.

Sardinia

Following this, we fly to Cagliari in Sardinia. Sardinia is famous for its beautiful scenery: rocky cliffs, pristine beaches, and a rugged interior. Highlights of our tour of Sardinia include a visit to an Nuragic

archaeological site in Barumini (Su Nuraxi Di Barumini), the remains of an ancient civilisation that inhabited the island between 1800 and 500 BCE. We also take a walking tour of the medieval town of Alghero and make a trip to Olbia, strikingly located on the Sardinian coast. We also make a boat tour of Maddalena Island. This archipelago is famous for its white sandy beaches, emerald sea, and deserted lagoons.

Corsica

Finally, we get the ferry to Corsica. Though famous as the home of Napoleon Bonaparte, Corsica remains one of the least explored islands of the Mediterranean Sea. Our trip to this beautiful island begins with our arrival in Bonifacio, and then travel to Sartene and Propriano. From here we travel to the capital of Corsica, Ajaccio, which we use as a base to visit the Golfe de Porto, one of the most stunning pieces of coast in the entire Mediterranean.

Our destinations are home to some of the world's great cuisines.

From the English-inflected cuisine of Malta, through the 'Italian with a twist' found in Sardinia and Sicily, to the unique cuisine of Corsica, we make sure that you are able to experience the local food culture. Each day, we eat breakfast, lunch, or dinner in a local restaurant. We also give you the opportunity to sample local wine and other delicacies.

Odyssey's guided tour of these Western Mediterranean islands is a magnificent holiday for those who wish to learn. Odyssey caters to mature travellers, whether couples or those journeying solo. The tour is fully escorted by an Odyssey Program Leader and professional English speaking local guides who share their expert knowledge of the history and culture of these wonderful islands. A short tour of just Malta & Sicily is also offered, click through to read about this program.

If your interest is in the Amalfi Coast, the cities of Northern Italy, or the spectacular Alps, don't click away! This tour is just one of many Italia tours operated by Odyssey each year.

Articles about Malta, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica 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, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica.

- [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](#)
- [48 Hours in Sardinia](#)
- [Visit Corsica](#)
- [Into Corsica, From Rustic Villages to Stony Cliffs](#)

Tour Notes

- Group size is limited to a maximum of 18 participants.
- There is a short tour option visiting only Malta & Sicily.

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. Sardinia's highlights include the ancient fortified towers of Su Nuraxi, the Maddalena Archipelago and Nora, Sardinia's best preserved Roman city
4. In Corsica, see the stunning UNESCO nature reserve of the Golfe de Porto and the Palais Fesch Musee des Beaux Art, home to an important collection of Napoleonic art
5. Enjoy wonderful scenery and local food and wine throughout all the islands

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:

5 nights at 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:

Hotel Waterfront 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:

Hotel Waterfront 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:

Hotel Waterfront 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:

Hotel Waterfront 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:

2 nights at 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:

2 nights at 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: Cagliari, Sardinia

Overview:

Today is a travel day. We transfer to the airport for our flight to Cagliari in Sardinia (currently, there are no direct flights between Sicily and Sardinia, so will travel via one of Italy's major cities – Rome or Milan). On arrival in Cagliari we'll be met and transferred to our hotel. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening. (B,D)

The island of Sardinia is the second largest island of the Mediterranean but remains surprising unexplored. It has rugged mountainous interiors with stunning coastal scenery as well as quaint hilltop towns and pretty fishing ports. Sardinia has a rich Neolithic history and the island still boasts over 7,000 "nuraghi" fortified tower houses from a civilisation which lasted from 1800 to 500BC. Later the island was settled by the Phoenicians, the Romans, the Vandals, the Byzantines, and the Saracens. In the Middle Ages, the island was fought over by the Pisans and Genoese before falling to the Spanish in 1295. It briefly fell to the Austrians in 1713 before the Kingdom of Sardinia was created by Vittorio Amedeo of Savoy in 1718. Sardinia finally became part of the unified Italy in 1861. Many say that Sardinia offers an almost primeval landscape of rocks sculpted by the wind and sea. D.H Lawrence noted

that the island was “left outside time and history.”

Accommodation:

3 nights at the Hotel Flora or similar.

Day 13

Locations: Cagliari, Sardinia

Overview:

This morning we enjoy a guided tour of Cagliari’s main sights, including the National Archaeological Museum.

We stop at a local restaurant for a group lunch, along with free time to explore the city on your own.

In the afternoon we return to our hotel for a talk on Sardinian history and culture. The rest of the day is at leisure. (B,L)

Accommodation:

Hotel Flora or similar.

Day 14

Locations: Cagliari, Sardinia

Overview:

Today we explore the archaeological treasures at Nora, Sardinia’s best preserved Roman city. Following lunch at our leisure, we continue on to Capo Spartivento via the scenic coastal road.

The evening is free for you to explore the local restaurants on your own. (B)

Accommodation:

Hotel Flora or similar.

Day 15

Locations: Fonni, Sardinia

Overview:

This morning we travel to Barumini and take a guided tour of [Su Nuraxi](#), the UNESCO world heritage site of the *nuraghe* towers, and the Casa Zapata Museum. We have some free time for lunch then continue on to Fonni via Nuoro, at the foot of Monte Ortobene. In Nuoro we visit the Ethnographic Museum, which displays all aspects of the material culture of the traditional Sardinian life, with over 8000 items belonging to the period between the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century

We arrive in Fonni late afternoon and dinner is at our hotel. (B,D)

Accommodation:

Overnight at the Hotel Cualbu or similar.

Day 16

Locations: Olbia, Sardinia

Overview:

This morning we have a some free time to rest or explore Fonni before we depart to Olbia in the early afternoon.

On arrival in Olbia we'll view the main sights of the city with a local guide before checking-in to our hotel. Dinner this evening will be at the hotel. (B,D)

Accommodation:

3 nights at Hotel Panorama or similar.

Day 17

Locations: Olbia, Sardinia

Overview:

This morning we meet our local guide for a day exploring the area. We start by joining a boat tour of the Maddalena Archipelago (subject to weather conditions). Lunch will be served on board. We then travel

back to our hotel in Olbia, with the remainder of the afternoon and evening free to explore at your own pace. (B,L)

Accommodation:

Hotel Panorama or similar

Day 18

Locations: Olbia, Sardinia

Overview:

Today we enjoy a full day touring northwest Sardinia. From Olbia we head firstly to Sassari, site of Sardinia's first university and still a vibrant uni city. Here we have a stop for lunch (own arrangements), then continue on to Alghero, still protected by its medieval walls and towers. After a walking tour here we transfer back to Olbia.

The rest of the day is at leisure. (B)

Accommodation:

Hotel Panorama or similar.

Day 19

Locations: Sartene, Corsica

Overview:

This we transfer to the resort town of Santa Teresa di Gallura. Where catch the ferry across to the port of Bonifacio in Corsica. Following our arrival at the beautiful harbour town of Bonifacio we'll enjoy a guided tour followed by some free time to explore on your own. Later in the afternoon we continue to the town of Propriano where we will overnight. En route we stop at the town of Sartene to walk around the medieval streets of this historic town. Dinner tonight is at our hotel. (B,D)

The island of Corsica is the fourth largest island of the Mediterranean and combines a stunning juxtaposition of mountain and coastal scenery. In the Middle Ages, Corsica was a colony of Pisa and later of Genoa but enjoyed a brief period of independence in the 18th century under the revered leadership of Pasquale Paoli. Therefore, the "sale" of the island by the Genoese to Louis XV of France for 40 million francs in

1769 has been a source of resentment for the islanders ever since. Ironically, the island was the birthplace of perhaps history's most famous Frenchman, Napoleon Bonaparte, and French and other visitors outnumber the locals approximately 6 to 1 in the busy periods of July and August. For all of this, Corsica remains one of the last unspoiled corners of the Mediterranean: poor, depopulated, beautiful, old-fashioned, and aloof. Despite its history of conflict with France it has now come to an agreement with its dominant, continental neighbour, although there is still some talk of independence from France among the Corsicans. (B,D)

Accommodation:

Overnight at Hotel Bartaccia or similar.

Day 20

Locations: Ajaccio, Corsica

Overview:

Today we explore Propriano before departing to Ajaccio.

En route to Ajaccio, we stop to visit Filitosa's 4,000 year old, life-size stone warriors. We continue on to Ajaccio and a guided tour including the Palais Fesch Musee des Beaux Arts, then transfer to our hotel.

Tonight we make our own arrangements for dinner. (B)

Accommodation:

Overnight at Hotel San Carlu Citadelle or similar

Day 21

Locations: Calvi, Corsica

Overview:

Today we visit the UNESCO listed Golfe de Porto, considered as one of the most beautiful bays in the Mediterranean. We'll have free time to explore and make our own arrangements for lunch, then continue to the

spectacular mountainside city of Calvi, in the late afternoon.

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

Accommodation:

2 nights at Mariana Hotel or similar

Day 22

Locations: Calvi, Corsica

Overview:

In the morning we enjoy a guided walking tour of Calvi to view the main sights and the Citadelle. We then take the coastal train to L'Île Rousse where we have some free time to explore on our own. Later we meet our coach again and drive back to Calvi via the old villages road, stopping along the way in Pigna and Sant'Antonio.

The remainder of the day is free for you to rest or continue exploring this beautiful town at your own pace

(B)

Accommodation:

Mariana Hotel or similar

Day 23

Locations: Bastia, Corsica

Overview:

Today we drive take a driver to Agriate Desert viewpoint and Bocca di Vezzu viewpoint before arriving in Corte, where we take Le Petit Train which is the local tourist train travelling across the town allowing us to see all the main sights. We then visit the Museum of Corsican Life and pause for lunch (own arrangements).

We return to Bastia in time for dinner at the hotel (B,D)

Accommodation:

2 nights at Hotel Port Toga or similar

Day 24

Locations: Bastia, Corsica

Overview:

In the morning we transfer to Saint-Florent, stopping along the way in Cape Corse and explore the pretty villages there with photo stops in Nonza, Pino and Centuri.

In Saint-Florent we enjoy a guided tour of this lovely port town, we then return to Bastia for a guided tour of the town.

After some rest we'll regroup and walk to a local restaurant for our farewell dinner. (B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Port Toga or similar

Day 25

Locations: Bastia, Corsica

Overview:

The tour concludes today after breakfast. (B)

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 24 nights of hotel accommodation.
- 24 breakfasts, 6 lunches, and 13 dinners.
- 1 internal flight and taxes (economy class, luggage restrictions may apply)
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides.
- Transport and field trips as indicated.
- Touring by comfortable and modern coach.
- Services of a tour leader.

- Ferry services as indicated.
- Service charges and gratuities.
- Detailed tour information booklet.

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 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

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