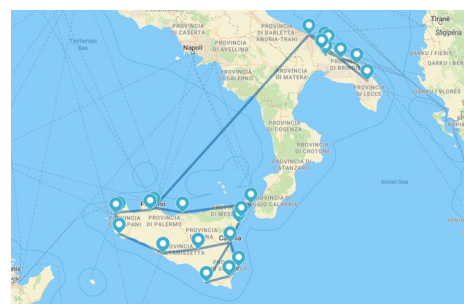




Italy, 13 Days · Tailor-made by car

Grand driving route through Apulia and the whole of Sicily

Italy is best discovered when explored at a leisurely pace, taking in landscapes, cultures and traditions that change with every kilometre. This driving route through the best of Apulia and Sicily will take you on a fascinating journey from Bari to Taormina, exploring two of Italy's most captivating regions from behind the wheel. Along the way, you'll discover the seaside charm of the Adriatic coast, white villages nestled amongst centuries-old olive groves, Baroque cities steeped in history, and some of southern Europe's most iconic landscapes. From the famous "trulli" of Alberobello and the monumental elegance of Lecce, to the vibrant character of Palermo, the Greek temples of Agrigento, the medieval alleyways of Erice, the Sicilian Baroque of Syracuse and Noto, the coastal beauty of Cefalù and Taormina, and the volcanic landscapes of the ever-majestic Mount Etna. This itinerary combines heritage, gastronomy, the sea and nature with a carefully curated selection of stops designed to let you enjoy the journey at your own pace, discovering the most authentic Italy.



CULTURAL

Departure date: Departures from July 2026 till June 2027

From: London

Travel details

DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - BARI

Departure on the flight to Bari. On arrival, collect your hire car at the airport and begin your journey through southern Italy. Depending on your flight schedule, you'll have time to get a first taste of this vibrant city on the Adriatic coast, where tradition and everyday life blend seamlessly.

You have a few hours to discover the charm of the historic centre of Bari, capital of the Apulia (Puglia) region, where daily life blends with tradition in every corner. Strolling through Bari Vecchia is like stepping into an authentic atmosphere, amongst narrow alleyways and locals hand-making the typical orecchiette pasta on their doorsteps.

The city, which has welcomed significant cultures over the centuries, boasts a major tourist and commercial port on the Adriatic Sea. Your visit could begin at the Basilica of Saint Nicholas, one of the most important churches in southern Italy, and continue to the Cathedral of Saint Sabinus, a magnificent Romanesque building.

Nearby, the imposing castle built by Emperor Frederick II in the 13th century on the foundations of an ancient Byzantine church serves as a reminder of the city's strategic past. After the tour, there is nothing better than taking a break to sample some local specialities such as frittelle or fresh fish from the Adriatic.

Overnight stay in Bari.

● DAY 2 · BARI - ADRIATIC COAST (A MARE - MONOPOLI) - ITRIA VALLEY

Early in the morning, Bari feels particularly authentic, as local life gradually comes to life. Soak up the atmosphere of Bari at your own pace, enjoying a coffee on a terrace before continuing your journey. When you're ready, head towards the Adriatic coast, where one of the most scenic stretches of the trip begins.

Just a half-hour's drive away lies Polignano a Mare, one of the most spectacular spots in southern Italy. Its houses perched on cliffs and the sea views make this place one of the most iconic sights of the trip. Strolling through its old town or visiting one of its viewpoints is a must to enjoy this unique landscape.

About 10 minutes away lies Monopoli, where its charming fishing port and walled old town envelop visitors in a relaxed and authentic atmosphere. It is the perfect place for a pleasant break by the sea.

As you head inland, the landscape changes, giving way to one of Apulia's most typical scenes: olive groves, stone walls and small, charming villages with whitewashed architecture. When it comes to spending the night, you can choose the location that best suits your travel style and use it as a base from which to explore this fascinating region.

Overnight stay in a selected hotel along the Adriatic coast or in the Itria Valley (Polignano a Mare, Monopoli, Alberobello, Ostuni or the surrounding area).

● DAY 3 · ITRIA VALLEY (ALBEROBELLO - CASTELLANA CAVES - OSTUNI)

Today you'll continue exploring the Itria Valley, organising your day at your own pace depending on where you've chosen to stay. It'll be the perfect day to discover some of the country's most iconic landscapes and villages. Ready for a day of contrasts between unique architecture, underground landscapes and the white light of southern Italy?

Arriving in Alberobello is like stepping into a setting unlike any other in the world. This picturesque village, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is famous for its legendary 'trulli' – cylindrical, white-washed buildings with large conical stone roofs that create an almost surreal landscape.

Strolling through its streets is an experience that goes beyond a mere visit: it is one of those places that stays with you long after the trip is over. To set foot here is to step into a real-life fairy tale, especially in the Rione Monti district, where most of these dwellings are concentrated. Among the must-see sights are the "Trullo Sovrano" – declared a National Monument in 1923 and the only two-storey one of its kind – the Church of San Antonio, and the Casa Pezzolla Museum of the Territory. Be sure to wander through its narrow alleyways, pop into the little craft shops and soak up the unique atmosphere that permeates every corner. An experience that invites you to savour the local cuisine, from cheeses and cured meats to the region's traditional olives.

We got back in the car to head to the Grotte di Castellana, located about 15 kilometres away. This impressive network of underground caves is one of the most significant karst complexes in Europe. Inside, a fascinating tour allows you to discover spectacular formations of stalactites and stalagmites in a setting of great natural beauty, creating a striking contrast with the light outside and adding a completely different dimension to the day.

Among its most notable features is the Grotta Bianca, known for the purity of its crystal formations, considered one of the most impressive in the complex. (Note: Entry to the caves not included. It is recommended to check opening times).

We set off again, this time heading for the town of Ostuni, a 45-minute drive away. Perched on a hill and entirely whitewashed, Ostuni is another of southern Italy's great icons. A leisurely stroll through its historic centre evokes the beautiful landscapes of the eastern Mediterranean and captivates with its luminous atmosphere. As the day draws to a close, the evening light envelops the town, highlighting the white of its façades and creating one of the most memorable scenes of the trip. On your return to your accommodation on the Adriatic coast or in the Itria Valley, you'll feel as though you've experienced one of the most fulfilling stages of the journey, combining history, nature and some of the most iconic landscapes of southern Italy.

(NOTE: If you wish, you can extend your stay in the Itria Valley and discover other villages such as Locorotondo or Martina Franca, ideal for soaking up the local atmosphere. Another option is to visit Matera, some 70 kilometres away, famous for its dwellings carved into the rock, the renowned "Sassi", and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

Overnight stay in a selected hotel along the Adriatic coast or in the Itria Valley (Polignano a Mare, Monopoli, Alberobello, Ostuni or the surrounding area).

● DAY 4 · ITRIA VALLEY - BRINDISI - LECCE

Departure for Brindisi, known as the historic 'Gateway to the East', on a journey of approximately one hour through landscapes of olive groves and rolling hills.

In Brindisi, a city linked since ancient times to trade routes and expeditions to the Holy Land, travellers will discover a lively seafront and a fascinating historical heritage.

Today, numerous tourist boats connect Greece with this town. Bathed by the Adriatic Sea, the town boasts thermal spas where you can enjoy a few hours of rest and relaxation. Any expert recommendations? During your stay in the city, you can visit the Swabian Castle, Piazza Duomo, home to the Loggia Balsano (14th century), the Portico of the Knights Templar, and the beautiful Romanesque cathedral.

We round off the final leg of the day in the city of Lecce, a half-hour's drive away, considered the Baroque jewel of southern Italy. Its historic centre, built of golden stone, invites you to take a leisurely stroll through monumental squares such as Piazza Sant'Oronzo or Piazza del Duomo. As evening falls, the city is transformed by enchanting lighting that highlights the Baroque details of the historic buildings. Come nightfall, enjoy a relaxed dinner on one of its lively terraces whilst you soak up the unique atmosphere of Salento.

Overnight stay in Lecce.

● DAY 5 · LECCE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

You can spend today exploring the city of Lecce in depth or discovering its attractive surroundings. Lecce is a city with a particularly rich history. The ancient Roman town of Lupiae flourished under Norman rule and reached the height of its artistic splendour between the 16th and 18th centuries.

A short stroll is all it takes to admire the Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo buildings dating from this golden age. The city is renowned for the decorative richness of its façades and for being the birthplace of important artists such as Giuseppe Zimbardo, whose works can be found throughout the Salento peninsula. We recommend a stroll through the lively Piazza Sant'Oronzo to discover the remains of an ancient Roman amphitheatre dating back to the 2nd century.

Nearby, the Basilica of Santa Croce stands as one of the finest examples of Baroque architecture in the area. It is also well worth visiting the Government Palace, built on the site of an ancient monastery. One of the most striking spots is Piazza del Duomo. Here you can visit magnificent buildings such as the Campanile, the Cathedral, the Bishop's Palace and the Seminary. Strolling along Via Palmeiri and visiting the churches of Sant'Angelo or San Matteo are excellent ways to continue exploring the city.

Beyond the historic centre, the area around Lecce offers interesting alternatives. Just a few kilometres away, the coastline allows you to enjoy quiet beaches and the cool Adriatic breeze.

Meanwhile, nature lovers will find the San Cataldo Nature Reserve and the Alimini Lakes area the perfect setting to unwind and enjoy nature.

(Note. Those wishing to extend their stay in Lecce can follow a beautiful itinerary that will allow them to discover such interesting towns as Gallipoli, Leuca and Otranto. Don't miss unique experiences such as exploring the prehistoric Zinzulusa Cave by boat (near Castro) or strolling through the winding streets of the island town of Gallipoli).

Return to and overnight stay in Lecce.

● DAY 6 · LECCE - BARI AIRPORT - PALERMO

Departure for Bari Airport to catch the flight to Palermo. Arrive at the airport in good time to return the hire car and complete check-in formalities.

Flight to Palermo, the gateway to Sicily, an island with a distinct Mediterranean identity where history, culture and tradition intertwine in every corner. Arrival in Palermo and collection of your hire car.

The time available on this first day in Sicily will depend on your flight schedule. Get ready for your first taste of the Sicilian capital, one of Italy's most fascinating cities thanks to its blend of influences.

Its millennia-old history has left a visible mark in every corner: Punic ruins, Roman monuments, Arab-inspired palaces, Norman churches, exuberant Baroque temples, Neoclassical buildings and Art Nouveau houses coexist within a unique urban landscape.

This extraordinary heritage was recognised by UNESCO with the declaration of Palermo's Arab-Norman complex as a World Heritage Site, which includes gems such as the Palazzo della Zisa and the Palazzo dei Normanni, with its spectacular Cappella Palatina, or the church of San Giovanni degli Eremiti.

At dusk, you can soak up the local atmosphere by heading to Piazza Pretoria, one of the liveliest spots in the city, where you'll also find the Palazzo Senatorio and the Church of Santa Caterina, or stroll through its historic streets before dinner and let yourself be enveloped by the city's atmosphere.

Overnight stay in Palermo.

● DAY 7 · PALERMO - MONREALE - ERICE - TRAPANI

Today we'll explore the city of Palermo and its surroundings.

About 30 minutes from the capital is the charming town of Monreale with its impressive Arab-Norman cathedral. The Cathedral, built by Norman king William II, is one of the wonders of the Middle Ages and among the finest examples of Norman architecture to be found in Sicily. With its 6,500 square metres of mosaics, from which a huge depiction of Christ emerges, it is an absolute gem. Our onward journey takes us to Trapani.

From there we'll turn onto the SP3 road to Erice. Despite being packed with tourists in high season, this charismatic town has retained its medieval charm and fairytale image. The views from Mount Eryx and the Balio gardens are magnificent. On a clear day, you can even see Etna and the coast of Tunisia.

Next to the garden is the Castle of Venus and the Temple of Venus. This goddess is closely linked to the fascinating history of the town, which is famous for its ceramic works and excellent rugs.

We'll continue en route to Trapani, zigzagging our way along the SP3 again. (Note: The SP3 is a narrow, panoramic road with lots of curves. If you prefer not to take this fourteen-kilometre journey, you can go up to Erice from Trapani on a modern panoramic cable car. Faster than driving, the cable car is an excellent vantage point from which to view the city, the sea and the vast salt pans). Once in Trapani, enjoy a "passeggiata" through its charming historic quarter.

Overnight stay in Trapani.

● DAY 8 · TRAPANI - SEGESTA-SELINUNTE / MAZARA DEL VALLO - VALLE DEI TEMPLI - AGRIGENTO

Two archaeological treasures lie ahead: the sites of Selinunte and Segesta, about an hour from one another depending on traffic and the road you decide to take. The important archaeological site of Selinunte (7th century BC) is one of the most spectacular places we'll find en route. From the nearby Marinella beach, you can enjoy the sea while admiring the magnificent ruins. Onward to Segesta, one of the most impressive Doric temples that still exists in the world (5th century BC). Crowning a secluded spot, there are still many legends surrounding its origin.

For those who aren't great fans of classical art and were hoping for a little less archeology, other options are available.

We'll continue heading down south, specifically to Mazara del Vallo, an interesting place to stop off briefly and enjoy its beautiful beach and seaside atmosphere. You'll be amazed to see how this elegant baroque town has been reconstructed on top of Phoenician and Norman ruins. Located about 200 kilometres off the coast of Tunisia, its Arab origins are palpable, especially in the urban landscape of the Kasbah, with its alleys, archways and courtyards. Don't miss its beautiful cathedral and the famous statue of the Dancing Satyr!

After a drive of around 1 hour and 30 minutes, we'll arrive at our next stop: the famous Valle dei Templi (Valley of the Temples) in Agrigento. Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, this site was once the heart of one of the most important and flourishing cities of the ancient world. The Acropolis, jutting out over a turquoise sea, was considered "the most beautiful city of mortals". Today it's one of the most visited sites in Sicily. (Note: The Regional Archaeological Museum and the famous Valle dei Templi can be seen in roughly 2 to 3 hours. Before setting off, check the opening hours to organise today's trip. The Valley is divided into three sections, all near to the car park, the information office and ticket office). We'll end the day wandering through the old town of Agrigento and savouring some delicious Sicilian cuisine.

Overnight stay in Agrigento.

● DAY 9 · AGRIGENTO - VILLA ROMANA DEL CASALE - PIAZZA ARMERINA - CATANIA

After wandering through the medieval quarter of Agrigento and visiting the cathedral and other monuments, we'll head for the famous Villa Romana del Casale, a fascinating third-century hunting lodge, just 15 minutes' drive from the town of Piazza Armerina. The Villa has 50 rooms and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Having been buried under mud for centuries, it was rediscovered in the 1950s in a perfect state. The Roman floor mosaics are magnificent and one of the best-preserved examples in the world. (Note: To enjoy this fascinating site without huge crowds, it's best to visit the Villa early in the morning or around midday, as long as it isn't too hot. For convenience, leave your car at the Villa car park). Once in Piazza Armerina, take a leisurely stroll through its streets and enjoy some of the most authentic sights of inland Sicily that we'll see during the trip. (Note: If you're travelling in mid-August, don't miss the famous "Palio dei Normanni" festival).

In the afternoon, we'll head to the vibrant volcanic city of Catania (World Heritage Site), located some 66 kilometres away. Along the way, we'll pass through beautiful orchards and stunning landscapes.

Located on the east coast, at the foot of Mount Etna, Catania is the second largest city in Sicily. This vibrant city boasts a surprising cultural heritage, as it has been controlled by Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Bourbons, Swabians, Angevins, Aragonese, Spanish and Italians... With great transport connections and an outstanding nightlife, its elegant baroque centre was built with volcanic stone from the Etna eruption of 1669. (Note: The city centre is a World Heritage Site, together with the late Baroque towns of the Val di Noto).

Overnight stay in Catania.

● DAY 10 · CATANIA - SYRACUSE - NOTO - RAGUSA - CATANIA

And now to Syracuse (World Heritage Site), a fascinating city influenced by a host of civilisations and cultures. Founded between 734-733 BC, it extends along the sea near the island of Ortigia, linked to the mainland by a bridge.

Considered one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world, the likes of Plato, Archimedes and Aeschylus once walked its streets. A great deal of its allure lies in the amazing fusion of its Greco-Roman past with 18th-century architecture, giving rise to a truly unique destination. Today, monuments such as the Temple of Minerva (transformed into a Christian cathedral), the Fountain of Arethusa, the Temple of Apollo and the Roman amphitheatre are reminders of its glorious past. (Note: You can divide the visit into two parts: one around the Archaeological Park and the other on the island of Ortigia).

And then we'll continue discovering the beautiful late baroque towns of the Val di Noto (World Heritage Site). Our next stop will be Noto, one of the most beautiful baroque cities in Sicily. A stroll along the elegant Corso Vittorio Emanuele, dotted with palaces and Baroque churches, is a real treat. The most monumental sites of the city overlook this avenue. You can find out about the luxurious life of the ancient nobility with a visit to the ornate Palazzo di Villadorata Nicolaci.

If you have time, you can include the beautiful town of Ragusa in today's itinerary. Maze-like and majestic, the heart of Ragusa is dotted with mansions of the local aristocracy, typical stone houses, elegant churches and cute piazzas.

We'll then return to Catania to further experience its lively nightlife and exquisite cuisine.

Overnight stay in Catania.

● DAY 11 · CATANIA - VOLCANO ETNA - TAORMINA

From Catania, the excursion to Mount Etna is a must (Weather permitting. If you need information, you can contact the Catania Tourist Office or visit the website of funiviaetna.com).

Visiting the largest active volcano in Europe will give you an insight into the intense volcanic activity on the island and also the chance to enjoy unique views of the region and the unusual moon-like landscape dotted with the distinctive vegetation of the region. With a majestic profile dominating the east of the island, it's a place where nature, culture and history come together to form a unique environment. (Note: The tour, which will take about 3 or 4 hours, is not included. Always follow the safety guidelines. Because of the unpredictable nature of the volcano, visiting with a guide is recommended).

Etna has two main entrances, one to the south and one to the north. The south side is the one most tourists use and provides easier access to the smouldering craters. If you arrive by road, follow the signs for "Etna Sud" to the "Rifugio Sapienza", about 18 kilometres from Nicolosi. At this point, you'll have to park the car and plan your uphill ascent, which is divided into two stretches.

On the first stretch, you can trek your way up or take the "Funivia dell'Etna" cable car. The second part of the climb must be done on a 4x4 bus. Tip: make sure you're well equipped with comfortable shoes, warm clothes and sunglasses.

After one of the most intense trips of the entire tour, we'll head for the beautiful Taormina, one of the towns that best reflects the historic soul of this fascinating island with Greek, Roman, Byzantine and medieval monuments... Sicily's first tourist resort, it's a perfectly preserved medieval jewel swathed in bougainvillea.

Peppered with romantic corners and charming little squares, its beauty dazzled writers such as Truman Capote, Thomas Mann or Goethe; royals and aristocrats such as William II; and film stars like Greta Garbo, Cary Grant, Orson Welles and Rita Hayworth...

Today, a steady trickle of tourists come here every day. Its monumental Teatro Greco (3rd century BC) overlooking the peaks of Etna, Bay of Naxos and the Ionian Sea is spectacular. Enjoy a pleasant "passeggiata" and soak up the glamour that accompanies the cobble-stoned streets, quirky shops and seafront terraces.

Overnight stay in Taormina.

● DAY 12 · TAORMINA - SAVOCA - MESSINA - CEFALU - PALERMO

We'll kick off the last leg of the "Sicily from Palermo to Cefalu" tour by travelling along a beautiful coastal road dotted with traditional villages.

After stopping briefly in Savoca, one of the most authentic locations of the island that was immortalised in "The Godfather", we'll head on to Messina. Located on the northern tip of the island's Ionian coast, from the town you can see the strait separating Sicily from the mainland. Dynamic and full of life, Messina boasts a stunning historic quarter home to the cathedral and elegant nineteenth-century buildings. On the way back to Palermo, you can stop off at the beautiful seaside resort of Cefalù, one of the best-preserved enclaves that allude to Sicily's Norman past. A great spot to savour delicious fish specialities on the terraces overlooking the sea. Immortalised in the film "Cinema Paradiso", this former fishing village with a medieval air boasts beautiful beaches, excellent tourist facilities and a lively atmosphere, all of which attract national and international visitors. In addition to laying out your towel and worshipping the sun, you can choose from many different activities, such as water sports, whale watching or a stroll through the old town to discover treasures such as the magnificent twelfth-century Arab-Norman cathedral, the monastery of Santa Caterina (now the City Hall) and the Episcopal Palace.

(Note: Parking in Cefalù in summer is not easy. It's best to leave the car on the outskirts). A 69-kilometre drive on the road along the north coast will take us back to Palermo. In the capital, we'll round off this unforgettable journey at some of its trendy shops.

Overnight stay in Palermo.

● DAY 13 · PALERMO - CITY OF ORIGIN

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

Your trip includes

Your trip includes

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| ✓ Return flight. | ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Bari. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Bari. |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Alberobello Bari. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Alberobello Bari. | |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Lecce. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Lecce. | ✓ Flight from Lecce to Palermo. |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Palermo. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Palermo. | |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Trapani. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Trapani. | |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Agrigento. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Agrigento. | |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Catania. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Catania. | |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Taormina. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Taormina. | ✓ Rent-a-car. |
| ✓ Insolvency protection. | | |

Your trip doesn't include

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| ✗ Accommodation taxes in Sicily direct payment in facility. | ✗ Possible toll charges. |
|---|--------------------------|

Destinations Visited

Bari



Polignano A Mare Bari



Monopoli Bari



Alberobello Bari



Grotte di Castellana



Ostuni



Brindisi



Lecce



Palermo



Monreale



Erice



Trapani



Mazara del Vallo



Agrigento



Piazza Armerina



Catania





Syracuse



Ragusa



Savoca Messina



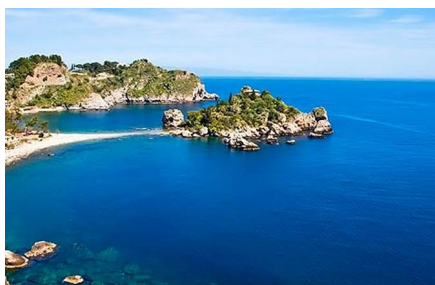
Cefalù



Noto



Taormina



Messina



Important remarks

- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far as possible.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air

stopovers are made.