Introduction
In the shadow of Sicily’s world-famous volcano Mt. Etna, emerge the incredibly beautiful mountains of the Parco delle Madonie, with peaks reaching 2000 meters. On your journey you climb up rugged cliffs for breathtaking views of small villages perched like eagle’s nests amongst the steep slopes. Walk this timeless landscape at ease, as daily life passes slowly here, following the endearing rhythm of the seasons. You will enjoy delicious fresh food, prepared by locals who still live off the land, tending their vegetable, olive groves and vineyards and harvesting figs, almonds and hazelnuts. From the highest mountains to the emerald sea, this is a first rate trekking experience. Serenity is yours.

Special highlights:
- Wonderful open landscapes dotted with medieval villages and hamlets
- Authentic accommodations in traditional farms
- Gorgeous flora and fauna
- A rich history brought to life in castles, churches and museums
- Cefalú, vibrant fishing town with a fabulous beach
- Warm, welcoming locals
- Mouthwatering Sicilian culinary specialties

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Sicily and first taste of the warm island breezes and aroma of the outstanding local cuisine. Transfer (about 1 hour) from Palermo airport to your first accommodation, a grandiose 17th century estate south of the Monte Madonie. Enjoy your first dinner at an ancient Olive Mill. Your palette will be overjoyed with the regional flavor and zest. Overnight in a farmhouse in Scillato.
/dinner/

Day 2: Scillato round walk
Ride up part of the mountain in a 4x4 jeep and hop off to begin an invigorating four hour walk along the impressive cliffs to the Portella Castellaro. You will be rewarded with breathtaking views over Central Sicily’s rolling hills and emerald blue Tyrrhenian Sea. The descent back to the estate is peaceful and panoramic. Overnight in a farmhouse in Scillato.
Walking distance: 12 km; walking time: 4,30 hrs; uphill/downhill walk: 530/900m /breakfast, lunch, dinner /

Day 3: Scillato to Petralia Sottana
You are in for an angelic day today. Transfer to the Vallone Madonna degli Angeli where your scenic adventure begins. The walk leads you through the ‘Valley of angels’-where the last 26 specimens of the endemic ‘Nebrodi spruce-fir’ grow to the high summits around Monte San Salvatore. Walk over the top of the Monte Cavallo and down along a small footpath to the charming town of Petralia Sottana. Overnight in a hotel in Petralia Sottana.
Walking distance: 15.5 km; walking time: 6 hrs; uphill/downhill walk: 530/900m /breakfast, lunch, dinner /

Day 4: Petralia Sottana to Pomieri
Today you journey into the heart of the Madonie Mountains. A sturdy climb through wooded hills leads you up to a 1500m high pass to your rustic accommodation at Pomieri. Immersed in the woods, this isolated mountain hotel offers outstanding high elevation panoramas. During springtime walks, look down at the limestone rocks and marvel at the gorgeous assortment of wild orchids. Overnight in hotel in Pomieri.
Walking distance: 16 km; walking time: 6 h; uphill/downhill walking: 830/490m /breakfast, dinner /

Day 5: Pomieri to Rocca di Gonato
Today’s walk is probably the most interesting one. As you walk in between the highest peaks of the Monte Madonie, look out for the giant Sicilian toads in the brooks of the Faguara, here you have wonderful views and will fully experience the silence of the Monte Madonie. Climb from Pompiere to the plateau “Piano Battaglia” (1700m), a well-known area that derives its name from a battle which took place there in the 11th century between the Arabs and Normans. Take a large circular tour around the picturesque Monte Ferro (1900m) before walking down to a one-of-a-kind agriturismo (farmhouse) in Gonato where you will spend the night.
Walking distance: 17 km; walking time: 7,5 h; uphill/downhill walking: 650/1150m /breakfast, lunch, dinner /
Day 6: Gonato to Castelbuono
Bid adieu to the lovely Madonie Mountains and take a three hour walk down to tonight’s agriturismo and enjoy a stroll around their delightful flower garden. Don’t miss a visit to the nearby medieval village of Castelbuono, built in the 14th century around the noble Ventimiglia family castle. Stroll along ancient narrow streets and squares for a true taste of small-town Sicily. Overnight in a farmhouse near Castelbuono.
Walking distance: 7 km; walking time: 2,5 h; uphill/downhill walking: 50/570m /breakfast, dinner/

Day 7: Cefalù round walk
After breakfast you will have a transfer to Castelbuono. Then you can take the local bus to the seaside town of Cefalù. Check in to your hotel and explore the town’s breathtaking Norman Cathedral and awe-inspiring Byzantine mosaics. Climb the ancient fortifications of the Rocca by the waves of the inviting blue sea. Celebrate accomplishing a fabulous walking tour with a delicious dinner in one of Cefalù’s fine fish restaurants.
/breakfast, dinner/

Day 8: Departure
The tour ends after breakfast. Catch the train or a taxi to the airport. You can also order a private transfer (about 1 hour) to the airport.
/breakfast/

DETAILED ROAD BOOK AND MAP WILL BE PROVIDED UPON ARRIVAL

Accommodation & boarding
You stay in 2 star hotel (day 3), 3 star hotels (days 4 & 7) and 3 star farmhouses (agriturismo) (days 1, 2, 5, 6) with private facilities on 3 days with fullboard (picnic lunch packs) and 4 days on halfboard.

Luggage transportation
Luggage transfer is normally provided by the accommodation itself. Please take the clear mark all your belongings with your name and put a small note with the name of the next accommodation in order to indicate where the bags should go to next (check your accommodation list). Ask the accommodation owner where the bags should be left in the morning. Labelling your belongings prevents mix ups, delays and loss. Bags should be ready and at the reception or store room by 9.00am.

Tour type: IT

Difficulty grade: B

Best period: April-October.

Group size: Min 1 person

Weather:
The climate in Sicily is known as “Mediterranean” which means that the summers are hot and dry and the winters are mild with light rainfall. The summer season can often seems long, as spring and autumn offer a continuation of the warm temperatures and long hours of sunlight. There can be sharp differences in climate on the island, which is caused both by the height of the larger mountains and distance from the sea. The finest weather is usually found around the coastal perimeter, whereas inland and in the larger cities, the climate becomes very hot and humid. Even if the weather is nice most of the time, you must always be prepared for suddenly developing fog and showers, especially in spring and autumn. This is the wettest region of Sicily. It is recommended to inquire about the weather expectations before you set out for the day, especially in mountainous surroundings. Ask your hosts.

General remarks
- The walks follow mostly mountain paths, unpaved ways, forest trails and passable animal tracks. Sometimes when the weather is bad the mountains can be wrapped in dense fog. When this occurs, it is not advisable to do the walks. In this case you can ask the accommodation owner to take you together with the luggage to the next hotel on the route.
- During your trip you will walk along marked or signed paths, but also unmarked routes varying between broad forest roads and narrow and steep mountain tracks. The use of a (simple) compass is necessary, not only because it is handy for a quick check on direction, but also because sometimes, suddenly developing clouds and fog can greatly reduce your visibility.
- During walks in limestone areas like the Madonie Mountains, paths can be slippery and muddy on rainy days. This happens because lime solves and washes away with rain water, whereas the clay component in limestone remains behind as reddish brown mud.
- Please leave gates and fences always behind you in the situation in which you found them. Sometimes you can’t open gates or pass fences easily. Please look for a spot where you can pass with as little as possible damage to yourself and the gate or the fence. Always consider that you are crossing someone’s property.

- It is important to take along a lot of water, tanning cream and head-gear. If it is very hot, we advise you start your walk as early as possible. If you plan to leave early, you must do your lunch shopping the day before, or when picnic lunch is included, inform the accommodation owner of your plans so he can prepare breakfast and the packed lunch in time.

Practical information:
- Best arrival & departure airport: Preferably Palermo, but also Catania
- Best arrival & departure stations: Termini Imerese on arrival and Cefalù on departure
- Detailed description of the public transportation connections and schedules is provided in the itinerary road book

Equipment and clothing:
Nothing compulsory. For the full list with recommended items see “General”.

Extension:
The tour can be extended with a stay in any of the places throughout the tour or any other city in Italy.

Group size: Min. 2 persons

The price includes:
Accommodation and boarding as mentioned above; transfers from the accommodation to the start of the walks on day 2 & 3, luggage transfer from Scillato to Castelbuono, transfer from Palermo airport to the first accommodation, 24 hour telephone assistance, detailed roadbook and maps in English.

The price does not include:
flights and public transportation, travel insurance, transfers to the airport on day 8, tips, entrance fees, alcohol drinks, cigarettes and other personal expenses.

Optional services (tentative prices): transfers from Cefalu to Palermo/Catania – 100/150Euro (1-3 pax); 150/170 Euro (4-8 pax), 3 hours guided tour of Palermo or Catania with a local private English speaking city guide – 140 Euro (entrance fees not included)
GENERAL

TOUR TYPES & GRADES
We provide different varieties of tours as regards to their types and difficulty grades! Whether you will choose individual and group tours with a guide or combined tours with a guide for some part of the trip depends on you. We emphasize on using local experienced guides with knowledge of the local language, culture, history, art, etc. The tours are conducted in the English language. Guides in other languages are available upon request.

Tour types
Our tours are divided in different tour types, regardless of being guided or not or if someone travels alone or in a group. We have prepared your vacation so that you can concentrate on new impressions and experiences, awaiting you all the time. Here is a description of the various tours:

IT: Individual tours
There is no guide on this tour. You travel individually and we are responsible for the hotel overnights and /some/ transfers. Sometimes you will travel together with other people. If you wish a guide can be arranged, if ordered. We take it for granted that you can read maps, provided by us upon arrival.

Difficulty grades
To prepare yourself for the best of your vacation we recommend that you start planning it in an advance. Good physical condition is required. In order to achieve it we advise you to start walking, jogging or cycling everyday. Swimming a couple of times a week is also highly recommended. You do not need much to get yourself in shape. And don’t forget that the most important tip for an unforgettable active holiday is to choose a trip which corresponds to your physical condition!

B: Moderate
Most of you, who are used to walking during a long weekend, will be in condition to cope with a tour of this level. You should be in good health condition and not too bad physical condition. We have successive days of longer and more difficult walking and days of lighter walking. Some parts of the day routes are done at a higher altitude. The paths are in good condition. We walk for 5-7h a day. You are free to skip some walks and have a rest.

Equipment and clothing:
You should always remember that you must try to keep the weight of your clothing equipment down to a minimum. Your packed rucksack should weigh no more than 10-15 kilograms.

Recommended items: waterproof rucksack (60 l) & daypack (35 l); walking waterproof boots with suitable ankle support; sandals; light casual shoes for walking and/or for travelling; gaiters; loose, casual trousers for trekking; waterproof trousers; fleece windstopper jacket; windproof, waterproof outer shell garment (breathable if possible!); hat for sun protection; sun glasses with UV protection; sunscreen lotion and lip balm; water bottle; torch (headlamp); mobile phone; underwear (not cotton); mosquito repellent; trekking sticks.

Vaccination
Immunisation against Hepatitis A is recommended two weeks prior departure.

Money and personal expenses
You will need some extra money to cover drinks, other sightseeing, museums, laundry and souvenirs. National currency in Italy has become the Euro, divided into 100 euro cents. Some small pensioni, trattorie and pizzerie will only accept cash but ATMs are widespread and easy to use. Here are examples of some comparative prices:
- Tea/coffee - 0,5-1 Euro
- Beer - 1,5-2 Euro
- Bottle of water - 1 Euro
- T-shirt - 10 Euro
- Slice of pizza -2-3 Euro

Cell phone coverage
Cell phone coverage in Italy is excellent. The phone system available in Italy, GSM, offers superior digital audio quality and reception and cellular coverage in Italy is virtually all over the country. There will be some spots where coverage is not available or even the possibility of areas where there are temporary downs but in general, cellular coverage and network availability are not issues.

Electricity
Electricity in Italy is 220 volts, 50 cycles alternating current (AC). For comparison, in the United States it is 110 volts, 60 cycle AC current. If you plan on using your own 110-volt appliances, you will need a voltage converter, unless your appliance is designed to also work with 220 volts electricity (dual voltage). For example, most laptops and some electric shavers are designed to work both at 110 and 220 volts. Plugging in an appliance that is not designed to run on 220 volts electricity without using voltage converter will most likely kill it.

About Italy
- Geographical coordinates: 42 50 N, 12 50 E
- Area: 301,230 sq km (incl. Sardinia and Sicily)
- Borders: France (Northwest), the Ligurian Sea and the Tyrrenian Sea (West), the Ionian Sea (South), the Adriatic Sea (East), Slovenia (Northeast), Austria and Switzerland (North).
- Coastline: 7, 600 km
- Elevation extremes: lowest point: Mediterranean Sea 0 m; highest point: Mont Blanc (Monte Bianco) de Courmayeur 4,748 m (a secondary peak of Mont Blanc)
- Population: 57,998,353 (July 2003 est.)
- Religions: predominately Roman Catholic with mature Protestant and Jewish communities and a growing Muslim immigrant community

Weather in Sicily
The climate in Sicily is hot and dry in the summer and rather mild and sometimes humid in the winter. The time when it is rainig more often is limited on the late autumn and the months of winter. The drought in summer sometimes causes trouble: Because of the extreme aridity even the tap water can become scarce. A particularity of the climate in Sicily is the „Schirokko“, a hot, dry and often dust-loaded wind, which originates in the desert regions of North Africa and blows from the south over the island. On its way over the Mediterranean it can take up much humidity and can cause heavy rain showers.

---

Penguin Travel
Postadresse: Frederiksberg Allé 32, 1820 Frederiksberg C, København. Tel. i Norge: 85 22 66 85.
www.penguintravel.no, info@penguintravel.no