THE AUSTRALIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE AT ATHENS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH ALUMNI TRAVEL

PRESENTS

SICILY

With Helen Nicholson | 18 September – 01 October 2021
SICILY with Helen Nicholson | TOUR OVERVIEW

YOUR TOUR LEADER: Helen Nicholson is an experienced, well-regarded study tour leader and has led more than thirty tours to Europe and Asia, including AAIA tours to Greece and Alumni’s Egypt, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia tours. She holds Archaeology degrees from the University of Sydney and has delivered numerous lectures, courses and study days for adult, museum and professional audiences. Helen spent several years working at the Powerhouse Museum and lectured and tutored at the University of Sydney for more than 20 years. She has worked on archaeological sites in Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Jordan, Cambodia and Uzbekistan, including the AAIA’s excavations at Torone and is a senior team member of Sydney University’s excavations at Paphos in Cyprus. Helen currently works as an archaeological consultant in Sydney.

Centrally placed between the eastern and western Mediterranean Sicily has attracted raider and traders to her shores for thousands of years. Sicily is also home to some of the most interesting archaeological sites and historical monuments in Europe, many with UNESCO World heritage listing. Focusing on stunning temples and theatres of the ancient Greeks who established colonies on Sicily, Phoenician settlements and the legacy of the Romans, this tour explores this fascinating legacy as well as the island’s more recent past. We visit spectacular Arab and Norman monuments in Palermo and late baroque towns from the time of Spanish rule in the southeast. This tour travels through beautiful natural scenery, including the volcanic terrain of Mt Etna, the coast and the mountains and countryside of inland Sicily. It also allows free time to explore and discover the vibrant culture and cuisine waiting to be discovered in Sicily today.
**SAT 18 SEP** **ARRIVE PALERMO**
On arrival we transfer and check into the hotel. In the late afternoon we gather and take a walk in the environs of our hotel and enjoy a welcome drink and light meal. (Meals in flight, D)

**SUN 19 SEP** **PALERMO**
Our exploration of Sicily starts in the island’s capital, Palermo. The city is home to some impressive buildings and churches from the Arab-Norman period of the city’s history with UNESCO World heritage listing that are our focus today. This includes visits to La Mortorana, San Cataldo, San Giovanni degli Eremiti, Royal Palace and the Cappella Palatina, the Duomo and La Zisa; all outstanding examples of the socio-cultural syncretism between Western, Islamic, and Byzantine cultures. Tonight we dine in a local restaurant. Overnight Palermo. (B, D)

**MON 20 SEP** **PALERMO**
We continue our exploration of these stunning World Heritage buildings today. This morning drive to the picturesque, seaside town of Cefalu and visit the Cathedral started by the king of Sicily Roger II in 1131 but not completed until 1240. After free time for lunch in Cefalu return to the outskirts of Palermo and visit the Norman cathedral at Monreale. Overnight Palermo. (B)

**TUE 21 SEP** **PALERMO**
This morning there is a visit to the Archaeological Museum in Palermo where many of the important finds from the island are displayed. The Museum is housed in the 17th century former House of the Fathers of the Congregation of San Filippo Neri. In the afternoon there is a visit to the Palazzo Abatellis, the regional art gallery, built as a luxurious home for one of Palermo’s officials. Overnight Palermo. (B)

**WED 22 SEP** **PALERMO - MARSALA**
We leave Palermo this morning and drive to Segesta once home to the Elymians. Here we see the 5th century BCE temple and the ancient theatre. We then continue to the picturesque, hilltop town of Erice where the Carthaginian sanctuary of the goddess Astarte became a sanctuary for the goddess Venus after it was taken by the Romans in the 3rd century BCE. In Erice there is free time for lunch. In the afternoon we drive east to Marsala where we spend the next two nights. Overnight Marsala. (B)

**THU 23 SEP** **MARSALA**
The western third of Sicily was largely under the sway of the Phoenicians and Carthaginians and this period of Sicily’s history is the focus today. We take a short boat trip to the island of San Pantaleo and the ancient site of Mozia where there are abundant remains of an important Phoenician settlement until sacked by Dionysius of Syracuse in 397 BCE. While on the island we visit the Whitaker Museums where finds from the site are displayed. Upon our return to Marsala we visit the Museum Baglio Anselmi. Overnight Marsala. (B)

**FRI 24 SEP** **MARSALA - AGRIGENTO**
After checking out of our hotel we drive east along the coast to the Selinunte. We first visit the Cave di Cusa ancient quarries, the source of stone for the columns of the many temples found at Selinunte. Afterwards we visit this extensive archaeological site founded by colonists from Megara Hyblea in the 7th century BCE. It was an important city until it came into conflict with Segesta at the end of the 5th century BCE when it fell under the sway of Carthage. Overnight Agrigento. (B, D)
SAT 25 SEPT   AGRIGENTO
In the morning we visit the impressive Archaeological Museum at Agrigento and the nearby remains of houses occupied by inhabitants of this ancient city. After free time for lunch we stroll through the evocative Valley of the Temples where several Greek temples were built along a ridge between the city and the sea. Overnight Agrigento. (B, D)

SUN 26 SEPT   AGRIGENTO - TAORMINA
We head inland today through countryside dotted with hilltop villages and visit the site of Morgantina and Archaeological Museum at Aidone. Afterwards we continue to the UNESCO World Heritage listed Villa Romana del Casale at Piazza Armerina to see what are probably the best preserved in situ Roman mosaics in this large country villa. We then continue to Taormina. Overnight Taormina. (B, D)

MON 27 SEPT   TAORMINA
Today we visit Mt Etna, the highest volcano in Italy. Overnight Taormina. (B)

TUE 28 SEPT   TAORMINA – REGGIO DI CALABRIA – MESSINA - SYRACUSE
After checking out of our hotel we cross the Straits of Messina that separate Sicily from mainland Italy and visit the Archaeological Museum at Reggio di Calabria.

Here are found the famous 5th century BCE Riace bronze statues found by divers. On our return to Sicily we will visit the Norman church in Messina and take a stroll in the historic centre, before driving on to Syracuse. After checking in to our hotel we take a late afternoon stroll in the historic centre of Ortigia. Overnight Syracuse. (B, D)

WED 29 SEPT   SYRACUSE
Today we explore ancient Syracuse. We start at the stunning Paolo Orsi Archaeological Museum where artefacts and sculpture from the area are displayed. Next we visit Castello Eurialo, the massive defensive fortifications constructed in the early 4th century BCE. We then explore what remains of this once prosperous and powerful classical city in the Neapolis Archaeological Park. Overnight Syracuse. (B)

THU 30 SEPT   SYRACUSE
The late baroque towns of south-east Sicily, built around their medieval centres after a devastating earthquake in the 17th century, are World Heritage listed and we visit three today: Modica, Noto and Ragusa. Tonight we enjoy a group dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight Syracuse. (B, D)

FRI 01 OCT   SYRACUSE - CATANIA
This morning we check out of our hotel and drive to Catania Airport for onward flights. (B, Meals in flight)
I'M INTERESTED...HOW DO I BOOK?

Complete, sign and return the attached Alumni Travel Booking Form along with your deposit of $450.00 per person to Alumni Travel. Upon receipt of your Booking Form and deposit, you will receive a confirmation of your place in writing.

LAND ONLY PRICE INCLUDES:

- Twin-share accommodation in comfortable hotels with private facilities
- City taxes at hotels
- Transport in comfortable air conditioned coaches
- Transfers, touring and entry fees as indicated in the itinerary
- Breakfast daily and other meals as indicated
- Service of a Tour Leader throughout the itinerary
- English speaking local guides
- All applicable tipping and gratuities for group arrangements
- Tour booklet

LAND ONLY PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- Air travel from Australia to Palermo, and returning from Catania
- Applicable passenger airport taxes
- Meals not listed in itinerary
- Beverages with meals
- Airport to hotel transfers if not travelling on suggested flights
- Visa requirements of the tour member
- Travel Insurance
- Items of personal nature (phone, laundry)

AIRFARES:

Please contact Tony (tony@outandabouttravel.com.au) for the best airfares available at the time of booking.

I'M INTERESTED...HOW DO I BOOK?

Complete, sign and return the attached Alumni Travel Booking Form along with your deposit of $450.00 per person to Alumni Travel. Upon receipt of your Booking Form and deposit, you will receive a confirmation of your place in writing.

DEPOSIT AND FINAL PAYMENT:

The deposit is accepted as a first installment of the tour cost and will be fully refunded if the arrangements can not be confirmed or the tour is cancelled by Alumni Travel. Final payment for the tour needs to be received at least 60 days prior to tour departure. An invoice will be sent to you about a fortnight before the final payment becomes due.

CANCELLATION AND REFUNDS:

Any cancellation from the tour needs to be done in writing. The cancellation date will be taken from the day your written cancellation is received by Alumni Travel. Because of the tour cancellation charges imposed by our various suppliers, the following cancellation charges apply, per person:

- Over 60 days: $100.00 - Administration Fee
- 59 - 40 days: 25% of tour cost
- 39 - 10 days: 50% of tour cost
- Within 10 days: 100% of tour cost

If a difference occurs between these cancellation conditions and those imposed by our suppliers, then the conditions of the supplier shall apply. There is no refund before or after travel has commenced or for any unused portion of the tour, either in regard to the standard group arrangements or separate independent arrangements.

CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS:

Any payments by credit card will be subject to a 2% non-refundable Merchant Administration Fee.

TRAVEL INSURANCE:

It is now standard policy with our company that all our international travellers have some type of international travel insurance, so that you are covered for any unforeseen circumstances that may arise. A comprehensive QBE insurance brochure is available from Alumni Travel. The insurance brochure contains the terms and conditions under which insurance cover will be offered to you.

ACCOMMODATION:

Catania

Palermo

GENEVA

SICILY with Helen Nicholson

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| ADDITIONAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS: |
| If you would like Alumni Travel to assist you with any additional arrangements pre or post tour, please contact our office for assistance at time of booking. All arrangements need to be finalised at least 30 days prior to your departure. |

| AMENDMENTS: |
| An administration fee of $30.00 per amendment will be charged for any changes made to any reservation within 30 days prior to your departure. Any additional charges imposed by our suppliers will also be payable. |

| PASSPORT AND VISAS: |
| It is the traveller’s responsibility to ensure that they possess the necessary travel documentation for the tour, such as a valid passport and any required visas. Your passport should be valid at least 6 months beyond the end of your journey and have two clear pages for each country to be visited in your journey. |

| FORCED CANCELLATION: |
| In the event that passenger numbers do not reach the minimum number of tour participants (approximately 10, excluding the tour leader) required for the tour, it may be necessary to either surcharge or cancel the tour. If such an event does occur, you will be notified at least 60 days prior to the tour departure. |

| TOUR PRICES: |
| This tour price has been calculated on the basis of exchange rates and tariffs at the time of print and is subject to change up until final payment has been received. At the time of final invoicing (approximately two months prior to the tour departure date), Alumni Travel reserves the right to re-cost the tour based on actual exchange rates. This could mean an increase or decrease to the above listed prices. Should you decide to cancel your arrangements on the basis of a change in the tour price, normal cancellation charges will apply. |