

ITINERARY ESPECIALLY PREPARED FOR
Best of Italy Tour
Hosted by Carolina Izzo – May 2011
Preliminary itinerary



This is your invitation to join Carolina Izzo as she explores some very unique aspects of Italian history and art. Experience the history, charm and culture of Rome and Sicily, the beautiful island of Capri and nearby Naples. Explore palaces, churches and Museums. Visit archeological sites, including some special sites not normally open to visitors. Carolina's unique background as a highly regarded art conservator for the past 27 years first in Italy and then in New Zealand has provided her with a wealth of historical knowledge and connections, which you will share with her on this intimately, crafted tour.

MAY 2011

Fri 06 **Christchurch or Auckland - Dubai**
Depart on Emirates Airlines to Dubai.

Sat 07 **Dubai**
Arrive Dubai this morning. You will be met and transferred to your hotel. Today is at leisure until an evening cruise on a traditional dhow with dinner included. (B,D)

Sun 08 **Dubai - Rome**
Transfer to the airport and depart on your Emirates flight to Rome. On arrival in Rome you will be met and transferred to your centrally located hotel where you are reserved for three nights. Join your fellow travellers for a welcome drink this evening, where you'll meet Sicilian born and Rome guide, Guido, who will co-host you in Rome and Sicily. (B)



Mon 09 **Rome**
This morning explore Rome by coach combined with some walking. Visits today will include the Roman Forum and Colosseum. Continue with a walking tour of the baroque squares including : Piazza Navona, the Pantheon (the largest pagan temple built by Emperor Adriana), the Spanish Steps and Trevi Fountain. This evening dinner is at a local restaurant. (B,D)

Tue 10 **Rome**
Today you will further explore Rome with Carolina and Guido. Visit the Vatican Museum including an insider view of the Vatican archives, which is normally prohibited. Meet with a specialist paper conservator and take a unique inside look, see how the Vatican protects its special records (*normally not available*). Today also visit St Peter's Basilica. Dinner tonight in a local restaurant. (B,D)

Wed 11

Rome - Palermo

Transfer to the airport and for your flight to Sicily. At your arrival in Palermo Airport you will be welcomed and transferred to Palermo city centre. Check in at the historical, but recently restored Hotel “Et Des Palmes”, where Richard Wagner, Maria Callas and other famous artists used to stay. After a short free time proceed to walk in the city centre of Palermo. During the typical “passeggiata” you’ll see the splendid late 19th century part of the city and the Teatro Massimo, until the late fifties one of the most famous stages in Europe. Afterwards walk back to the hotel for a welcome dinner with exquisite typical Palermo dishes. (B,D)

Thu 12

Palermo

This morning drive to Monte Pellegrino, now famous for the Sanctuary of Saint Rosalia - the patron saint of the city of Palermo. Her popularity is demonstrated by plenty of devotional gifts, but also in prehistorically times, when men still lived in caves, this place was already sacred for the first human settlements in Sicily. The wonderful murals they left us are to be seen in the Archaeological Museum of Palermo.

Afterwards drive to Mondello with its wonderful beach, to view wonderful examples of art deco and liberty style mansions. Then continue to Palermo. During your walking tour in Palermo, you’ll step back in time and view the history of Sicily and the Mediterranean world. Founded by Phoenician, refinished by the Arabs, loved by the Normans, transformed by the Spanish - this city never lost its importance. You’ll see the main points of interest including the Byzantine Church Martorana and Cataldo, the Renaissance fountain of Piazza Pretoria, the Cathedral and Norman Palace.

During the evening is a welcome cocktail party in a special Sicilian Palace, where you will be hosted by Sicilian royalty and have an inside glimpse of Sicilian aristocracy. Dinner own arrangements. (B, L, Cocktail party)



Fri 13

Palermo – Monreale – Palermo

This morning visit one of the historical markets. Continue to Monreale where the monastery was created in order to fight the power of the bishop of Palermo. Colourful Byzantine art, the realistic roman sculptures and the wonderful ornaments of the Arabic tradition all contribute to the beauty of this monastery! Free time for lunch. This afternoon is at leisure. Dinner this evening is your own arrangement. *Optional dinner at a local restaurant.* (B)

Sat 14

Palermo – Marsala – Mozia - Palermo

Today follow the footsteps of the ancient Sicilian history. Sicily has more Greek temples than Greece itself and one of the most important examples is Segesta. The Elymian settlers are thought to have their origins in the fall of Troy. The theatre demonstrates how keen the Greeks were for breathtaking views. Continue past windmills and the Salinas near Trapani to Marsala. This small Sicilian city gave the name to the famous Marsala wine – in ancient times Lilybaeum was mainly known as one of the most important harbours of the western coast of Sicily. There will be time for a Marsala wine tasting at the famous Florio’s, one of the most important Italian families of 19th century and nowadays excellent wine-producers! Continue to nearby Mozia. The Phoenicians transformed this inhospitable island, which they called Motya, into one of the most affluent cities of its time, naturally defended by the lagoon as well as high defensive walls. Dinner tonight is your choice. (B, Wine Tasting)



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Sun 15

Palermo – Agrigento - Falconara

Depart for Palermo and take a morning drive to Agrigento. The ancient city of Akragas was one of the richest Greek cities during the 5th century BC. The Valley of the Temples still clearly demonstrates the importance of the city in those times.

The archaeological museum holds numerous interesting findings from Agrigento and the surrounding region, arranged by expository theme. It also contains an outstanding collection of Attic vases, including the famous Crater of Dionysus, as well as the marble statue of the Ephebus of Agrigento. After our arrival at our hotel in Falconara we will have the time to appreciate the beauty of our hotel, the Falconara Resort, situated directly on a private beach. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. (B,D)

Mon 16

Caltagirone - Villa Del Casale

After breakfast, drive to Caltagirone, a town whose name derives from the Arabic qal'at-al-ganom ("Castle of the Genies"). It was inhabited since pre-historical times, as attested by the presence of two necropolis dating from the 2nd millennium BCE and by numerous other archaeological findings. The town has a long tradition of craftsmen who worked on ceramics and created a very special flair with their ceramics, sculpture and the amazing majolica production with beautiful fine art work, with stunning colour.

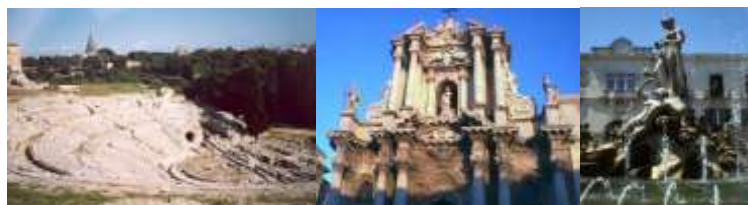
Then we visit the Roman Villa Casale at Piazza Armerina. Built in the first quarter of the 4th century AD the owner ruled the region for about 150 years. After that time the Villa was destroyed and forgotten until 1929. Today these beautiful mosaics explain, nearly without a word, the daily life in roman times. Afterwards we visit the winery Maurigi Tenuta di Budonetto and learn more about the history of wines in this region! Return to the hotel later this afternoon with time to relax before dinner. (B,D)



Tue 17

Falconara - Noto - Siracusa

Depart Falconara this morning to Ragusa Ibla; this city still breathes the taste of the noblemen from the 17th century, Modica. Continue to nearby Noto. Until the eighties of last century it was nearly emblematic for the ruin of Sicilia's art treasure, but now its facades are rebuilt, making it ideal to discover the city on foot. Noto is famous for its fine buildings of the early eighteenth century, considered among the main masterpieces in the Sicilian baroque style. In 2002 Noto and its churches were declared a UNESCO World Heritage. In the late evening we reach our hotel in the city centre of Siracusa. Dinner and overnight in the hotel. (B,D)



Wed 18

Siracusa

When Siracusa was still named Syrakousai it played an important role as one of the main powers of the Mediterranean world. This city is over 2,700 years old and it is reputed that more than 200,000 people lived here in 500 BC.

This morning take a short drive to the Archaeological Park Neapolis and the Archaeological Museum Paolo Orsi. In the afternoon we visit the ancient city centre of Syracuse, Ortigia set on an island connected by bridges to the mainland. View small medieval streets, the harbour and the cathedral, where the Temple dedicated to the goddess Athena is encapsulated into its walls, with Doric columns shaping its nave and aisles. Dinner this evening will be a special progressive dinner, walking in between restaurants – a unique experience where pleasure of food and walking under the stars, through the evening city lights, forge a very special moment. (B,D)

Thu 19

Syracuse - Catania

Depart this morning to Catania, the economic hub of Sicily and check in at our charming hotel, the UNA Palace of Via Etnea. Dinner tonight is your choice. (B)

Fri 20

Ionian Islands (optional tour by boat)

After a very early breakfast transfer to Milazzo to board the motorboat to Lipari in the Ionian Islands. Direct transfer to Lipari Marina Lunga, where we stop for a visit to the archaeological park and the old town centre. Then continue from Lipari for the circumnavigation of the island, visiting the White Beaches, the Pumice Pits, Faraglioni, Papa Giovanni's rock and the Grotta degli Angeli. Stop at Vulcano for a snack, with time for a swim. Visit the sulphur mud and hot-spring water spas. Later depart from Lipari to sail around the island, viewing the Grotta del Cavallo and the Piscina di Venere.

Return to Milazzo is scheduled for approximately 5.45pm. Return to Catania. Dinner and overnight in Hotel. (B,D)

Optional tour should be pre booked, additional cost NZD 100.00 per person.

Sat 21

Catania – Eta – Taormina - Catania

Leisurely check out this morning around 10am. Drive to the Gambino's winery, in the renowned wine region of Mt Etna. Time to sample some special local wines. Continue to Mt Etna which is the second largest active volcano in Europe, currently standing 3,329 meters high. It covers 1,190 km². This huge territory will offer during the morning a contact to powerful nature, you'll see stunning panoramas and unique landscapes. Then drive to Taormina, also named the "Ionian Pearl". The town's narrow streets with exclusive shops, along with the incredible view from the Roman-Greek Theatre and Medieval buildings, make it unique. Return to Catania to the harbour for check in and embark on the overnight boat to Naples. (B, Wine Tasting)



Sun 22

Naples - Capri

Arrive this morning at 7.30am at Molo Immacolatella Dock, meet your driver who will transfer you to the Molo Beverello Dock for the hydrofoil to Capri. On arrival you will be met at Capri Marina Grande and transfer to the main Square of Capri for an orientation walking tour. Later you will be transferred to the Hotel San Michele in the Anacapri area where you are reserved for two nights. The rest of the day is at leisure to explore this beautiful island at your own pace. Dinner tonight is your choice. (B)

Mon 23

Capri

This morning take a short walking tour, escorted by Carolina, including a visit to the Axel Munthe Museum and the nearby Villa San Michele. This afternoon explore more of the



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island by coach, including the Villa Jovine (Tiberius Villa). Dinner this evening is at a local restaurant. (B,D)

Tue 24 **Capri-Naples**

Transfer this morning to the Marina Grande for your hydrofoil to Naples. On arrival you will be met by your coach and continue to the Monastery of San Martino. Continue to the Archeological Museum where there are many exhibits relating to Pompeii. Later check into the Hotel Miramare. The rest of the day is at leisure. This evening your dinner is at a local restaurant. (B,D)

Wed 25 **Naples**

Today explore Naples and Pompeii or Herculaneum. Later this afternoon visit the Studio of Conservation where Carolina's colleagues are based. This evening a farewell dinner is included. (B,D)

Thu 26 **Naples – Rome - Dubai – Auckland or Christchurch**

Transfer to the airport this afternoon for your flight to Rome. Connect with Emirates to Dubai. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel for an overnight stay.
(Option to extend your stay in Italy and return from Milan, Rome or Venice or another European city with Emirates Airlines).

Fri 27 **Dubai – Auckland or Christchurch**

Early this morning transfer to the Airport for your flight to Auckland or Christchurch.
(Optional Dubai extension or optional side trip to Cairo, Amman, Beirut, Damascus or Muscat available)

Sat 28 **Auckland or Christchurch**

Welcome home.

TOUR INCLUSIONS

- Hosted by art conservator, Carolina Izzo
- Co-hosted by Sicilian born Guido, your guide in Rome and Sicily
- Return economy class air travel on Emirates Airlines ex Auckland or Christchurch/Dubai/Rome/Christchurch or Auckland
- Overnight stop in Dubai enroute, including return transfers and breakfast
- Dhow dinner cruise in Dubai
- All transfers airport - hotel return
- Transport in modern air-conditioned coaches
- Flight from Rome-Palermo and Naples-Rome
- Local English speaking guides, as required
- First Class hotels
- Breakfasts daily
- Sightseeing and entrance fees as specified
- Local restaurant dinners as specified
- Wine tastings as specified
- Special walking dinner tour in Siracusa
- Farewell dinner in Naples
- Porterage at all hotels
- Overnight ferry from Sicily to Naples with twin-share cabins
- Return ferry from Naples to Capri
- Tipping for all group activities and events including local guides
- Tipping for included meals
- Pre - travel notes for Italy

TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- Personal Expenses
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Late check outs
- Optional stopovers
- Additional airport taxes on optional stopovers
- Mini bar or other personal expenses
- Drinks with included meals
- Meals not specified
- Tipping for any personal optional sightseeing or non included meals
- Special trip by boat to the Ionian Islands (optional pre-booking is recommended)

NZD PER PERSON	Twin	Single supplement
Minimum of 12 clients	\$14,495	\$3,098
EARLY BIRD PRICE (see conditions * below)	\$13,895	\$2,998
* Deposit of \$1000 by 30 Aug. Balance by 30 Nov 2010		

Business class travel option: Surcharge of NZ \$6,999 per person ex Christchurch or Auckland.
First class option is available on request.

Option also available to join the tour in Rome.

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Tour Conditions

The tour is a boutique programme, subject to a minimum of 12 participants and a maximum of 16 tour participants. The tour price will increase if there are less than 12 participants and/ or currency fluctuation, unforeseen local changes; fuel surcharges increases or local departure tax increases prior to full payment.

A non-refundable deposit of \$1000.00 is required with registration.

Limited seats are available therefore early registration is essential. Hotel check-in/out times are normally IN: 2pm/OUT: 12noon. The only way to guarantee an early check-in or late check-out is to pre-book the night before (early check-in) or night after (late check-out). Otherwise early check-in and late check-out are subject to availability when you are there. Deposit, payment and cancellation conditions apply, please refer to the official Innovative Travel tour registration form. The registration form and non-refundable deposit of \$1,000 must be received by Innovative Travel to register for this tour. The tour itinerary is the preliminary programme; there may be some minor amendments prior to the finalisation of the tour. Interim deposits will be required with final payment due 16 March 2011. Due to the boutique design of this tour along with Carolina's and Guido's personal connections in Italy, there maybe some additional visits scheduled while actually on tour.

Cancellation conditions:

- From registration to 31 December 2010 \$500 per person;
- 01 January – 15 February 2011 \$1,000 per person;
- 16 February – 16 March 2011 \$3,500 per person;
- 17 March – 05 April 2011 50%;
- 06 April - to departure 100%.

As some walking is involved on a regular basis, you should be able to walk a minimum of 1 km without assistance. Other general terms and conditions are as per the Ancient Kingdoms Holidays brochure. Registration will not confirmed until Innovative Travel has received your registration form and deposit. If you are within New Zealand you may reserve via your local travel agent or contact Innovative Travel for more information.

If you live outside New Zealand, please contact Innovative Travel directly on email: tours@innovative-travel.com for options to join in Rome. The price is also available in Euro, if you live outside New Zealand.

Travel Advisory Information can change at any time and we suggest clients refer to The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Travel Trade Advisory website at www.safetravel.govt.nz prior to departure for the latest up to date information and general advice regarding the countries you are visiting.



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