EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Active Sicily (FSI 2014)

MULTI-ACTIVITY

TOUR DURATION **8** DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Comfort: Standard
Tour Type: Centre Based
Tour Code: FSI

Tour Highlights - Active Sicily

- ✓ Palermo - Sicily's capital - learn to cook pasta/pizza and relax on Mondello Beach
- ✓ Etna Land - visit an award winning water park with 14 slides
- ✓ Madonie Adventure Park - Stay in a tree tent as well as cycle, try out zip lines and tree climbing
- ✓ Coastal adventures - Try sea kayaking in the Isole Ciclopi Marine Park
- ✓ Alcantara Gorge - Walk amongst the lava landscapes of the Alcantara River Valley
- ✓ Blue Cave Bay - Snorkel in the Isola Bella Marine Park
- ✓ Mount Etna - Walk some of the way up Europe's highest and most active volcano

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	6 nights Standard Hotel 1 night Standard Tree-House
Included Meals:	7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 7 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Palermo airport
End Point:	Tour ends: Catania airport
Transport:	4WD, Bus, Boat
Countries:	Italy, Sicily
Minimum Age:	From 11 years

Active Sicily

Travel with us on a family holiday to beautiful Sicily, off the southern tip of Italy, an island that offers adventure with a rich historical backdrop. This active trip blends a great variety of activities in places of natural beauty with the cultural highlights of Palermo and Taormina. Activities include; sea kayaking, snorkeling, cycling, a water park, climbing, archery, power fan (which involves free-falling from a high platform attached to a safety harness), walking on Mt Etna and a pasta/pizza cookery lesson. No experience is required and all equipment and expert instruction is provided. Activities are graded easy and just require an enthusiasm for adventure! Each evening we return to the comfort of our hotel and even a tree tent! where we can enjoy typical Sicilian cuisine.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Tour Comfort: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Your tour itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Palermo Airport. Drive to Trabia

Arriving at Palermo Airport today we drive out to the town of Trabia, close to Termini Imerese, a well-known area that local tourists enjoy. Located some 20 kilometres outside of the city, we spend our first few days in a beautifully converted noble

residence. Set amidst beautiful gardens we'll enjoy a traditional Italian dinner this evening with time for a dip in the pool during our stay.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

DAY 2 Full day's excursion to Palermo

Overlooking the azure waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea, Palermo is one of Sicily's cultural and historic highlights. We spend the day exploring some of its treasures today, stopping off at the Piazza Marina to visit Villa Garibaldi - a small garden set amidst some of Palermo's best-known historic buildings. Continue by foot to the city's most picturesque and historic market (Vucciria), brimming with colourful fruit and veg stalls. Then we take a drive up to the summit of Mount Pellegrino to enjoy some great views down over the town and the Gulf of Palermo, before continuing on to Mondello Beach for some free time. This afternoon we return to Palermo downtown to enjoy a cookery lesson of pasta and or sfincione (local style pizza). Later drive back to the Hotel .

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

DAY 3 Madonie Adventure Park and stay in Tree Tents

After breakfast this morning we drive 2hrs to the Madonie Adventure Park, for a full day amongst the wooded landscapes near Petralia Sottana. The first part of the day we spend on bikes, exploring ancient Roman ruins, winding dirt tracks and sleepy old villages. Suitable for beginners, the 16km ride takes us up to lunchtime, after which we have a free afternoon to enjoy more of the parks many delights. You can choose to either brave the assault course through the trees, with zip lines, rope ladders and 'Tibetan bridges' or try your hand at archery, tree climbing and 'Power fan' (which involves free-falling from high platforms whilst attached to a safety harness) Cycling: approximately 3-4 hours/16 kilometers (depending on the group). There are five tree tents within the trees set around 6 meters off the ground surrounded by the forest. The tents can accommodate three people per tent with another five tents on the ground which are positioned on platforms for those wanting to sleep nearer the forest floor!. The area is illuminated at night and there are toilets close by.

Overnight: **Standard Tree-House**

DAY 4 Visit Etna Land

Pack your swimsuits, water shoes, sunscreen and goggles as we experience the islands largest water theme park. The award winning water park boasts over 14 slides all designed for excitement and adventure including; 'The Black Hole (guests are seated on a 2-person dinghy that slides through a dark and twisting tunnel), 'Jungle Splash' (20 seater boat with a drop of 30 meters towards the splash zone below), 'Hydro and Dark Kamikaze' slides both with steep drops where your back sometimes doesn't even touch the slide, 'Twin Twister' (four slides linked together over 120 meters) and 'Rafting River' with a 4-person dinghy that slides right into the pool. Take a break from the excitement by enjoying a relaxing float around the "Lazy River" or at the "Blue Lagoon", an oasis of rocks and waterfalls. You can enjoy a hydro massage at the relaxing "Hydro Pool" . The "Wave Pool", the largest in Europe, activities the waves in one hour intervals of splashing fun. For a more sedate experience, the park also has a wave pool, children's lagoon and hydro pool. There are some height restrictions on certain attractions up to 1.4 meters high

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

DAY 5 Trip to Mount Etna

One of the highlights of our journey is a visit to the slopes of Mount Etna, the highest volcano in Europe (3330 meters) and one of the largest in the world. We'll drive up the mountain this morning, passing through citrus groves and beech woods to Linguaglossa Rovittello where we taste a selection of dairy products and salami. We continue to Curva Sparita which is where the lava flow of 2002/2003 engulfed a part of the old road to Mareneve before arriving in Piano Provenzana (1,800m). We have the opportunity to view photographs of previous eruptions that have been taken by a local well known photographer. We continue by foot along a path that goes up to the crater of the Northeast side of the volcano to an altitude of about 2,300 m, stopping off at an old Bottoniera (numerous craters formed in 1923 including the longest one on the volcano) where we also stop for lunch. We continue the walk for around 1 ½ hours returning to Piano Provenzana where we meet our transport and visit a volcanic cave which is one of more than 200 caves in the area (1,750 m) before returning by bus to our hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

DAY 6 Explore Alcantara Gorge: walk and Sea Kayak

We spend today exploring the landscapes that lie along the Alcantara River. Carved from basalt rock, the gorge drops down over 50 meters, following the course of the river and providing us with some stunning but short walking trails. We hike up to the Terrace of Venus this morning, before continuing along the Gorge Trail to view the surreal monoliths of lava that lie strewn across the valley floor. Total 2km/1hr walking. After lunch we then travel to Aci Castello where we will sea kayak along a guided course exploring the protected marine park of Isole Ciclopi for a few hours which includes a circumnavigation of the towering sea rocks of the Faraglioni di Actirezza before returning back to Acicastello - life jackets, tuition and auto draining 2 or 3 seater kayaks are provided

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

DAY 7 Tour of Taormina and Snorkeling

This morning, we depart for the town of Taormina. Perched on a cliff overlooking the Ionian Sea, this pretty town is home to an ancient Greek theatre which is famous for one of the most iconic views in Sicily - that of snow-capped Etna, historic churches and a number of lively bars and cafes. We then take a cable car to Taormina Mazzaro where we pick up our snorkeling gear. We visit the Isola Bella Marine Park by rib boat and snorkel in two spots, the Blue Cave Bay and Isola Bella South Side. Snorkelling equipment is provided including; fins, mask, snorkel, wet suit and life jacket.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

DAY 8 Tour ends Catania

After breakfast we drive to Catania airport where the tour ends.

Ability to swim required

Please note: Participation in canoeing, kayaking, or rafting (including white-water) requires that you are able to swim 25 metres unaided.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

The hotel in Trabia was once a noble residence and has been converted into a pleasant hotel with en-suite rooms fitted with air conditioning, satellite TV, direct line telephone, minibar and hairdryer. The hotel provides a number of facilities including a number of bars, a private pebbled beach (no shuttle service), two swimming pools, restaurants offering Italian and international cuisine and four tennis courts. The hotel has free Wi-Fi facilities but not throughout the hotel

One of the many attractions of this holiday is staying in the tree tents in Madonie Adventure Park. There are five tree tents within the trees set around 6 meters off the ground surrounded by the forest. The tents can accommodate three people per tent with another five tents on the ground which are positioned on platforms for those wanting to sleep nearer the forest floor!. The area is illuminated at night and there are toilets close by. The forest is also rich in biodiversity and has a wide variety of plants and trees including Chestnut, Pine, Poplar and Beech.

The hotel that we stay at along the coast from Taormina near Mount Etna has been created to keep the characteristic Ionian design and is located on the waterfront, 200 meters from the beach. The hotel is set within beautiful garden surroundings and a private park. Facilities include; a buffet restaurant, pool and terrace area. Rooms offer a double bed and two sofa-beds, private bathroom with shower and hairdryer, satellite TV, safety deposit box, internet connection and private terrace. The hotel has free Wi-Fi facilities and Internet access point

Food & Drink

Included meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches,7 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow £20 per adult for tipping

Foreign Exchange

Italy

ATM Availability: Major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Larger hotels and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: Only in major towns. Please note, the exchange rate for cash and Travellers Cheques is poor.

Local Currency: Euro.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: GBP.

Where to Exchange: Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities.

Sicily

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

For passengers making their own travel arrangements, please ensure you join the group as described on day one of the tour itinerary. If you are considering purchasing your own airline tickets, you can book these through any travel agent, directly with an airline or through an online flight consolidator. In all cases, we would be happy to arrange transfers to and from the joining point of your tour if required.

Joining Tour Abroad

Clients booked on **'Land Only'** arrangements should make their own way to the joining point. Please refer to separate **'Joining Instructions'** for time and place of rendezvous with tour leader

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining **any** of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable.

If you require travel insurance for your tour, Explore Worldwide is an appointed representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority. Our travel insurance policy is specially tailored to the needs of the adventure traveller and will cover you for any included activity on any Explore trip. You can either purchase this at the time of booking or call us on 0844 499 0903 after you have booked.

Visa Information

Italy: Visas are not required by UK, E.U Nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Lone Parents

Italy

Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the Italian embassy for further information on exactly what may be required.

Sicily

Vaccinations & Protection

Italy

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider.

Sicily

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

Italy

April/May and October/November are pleasantly warm. June/September are the hottest months. Showers are common in Autumn.

Sicily

Clothing

In summer you will need clothing for hot, humid conditions. Sunhat, sunglasses, long trousers and long sleeved shirt recommended for protection from the sun. In May and October half-term the sun should still be strong but temperatures will certainly be lower than in the summer months, particularly at night when you will need some warmer clothing and jackets.
At any time of year you will feel cold at the top of Mount Etna, therefore you should bring warm clothes.

Equipment

A water bottle, sunhat and high factor sunscreen are all essential. You will need a towel for the snorkelling and beaches and pools. You may also wish to bring cycle helmets with you for the mountain biking though one is provided and we only cycle for 2/3 hours. A torch is useful in case of powercuts/ emergencies.

Footwear

We recommend a good pair of sturdy recreational shoes/walking boots for the short walks, Mount Etna, cycling and climbing and activities in Madonie Adventure Park. Trainers and/or sandals for travelling/beach time.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Food

The prices for meals and drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive. The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide.Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Italy

Lunch £: 23.00

Dinner £: 32.00

Sicily

Drink

Italy

Bottle of Beer £: 4.00

Water £: 2.20

Sicily

Country details

Italy

Population: 60,681,514

Size of Country: 301,338

Major Language: Italian

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Sicily

Electric Supply & Plugs

Italy

2 Pin Round

Sicily

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport . Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures and traditional, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: The Sunshine Orphanage (which cares for abandoned children in

Luxor, Egypt), Education for All (sponsoring children through their secondary education in Morocco), The Hope Foundation (helping an Indian Village to recover from the 2004 Tsunami) and the Mufindi Orphanage, which support AIDS orphans in Tanzania.

We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation, Travel Operators for Tigers (helping save the Bengal Tiger from extinction) and Friends for Conservation. We have also adopted a beautiful Sri Lankan Elephant called 'Serendip'.

We are delighted to have received a Five Star sustainable tourism status from the Association of Independent Tour Operators in recognition of our on-going commitment to sustainable tourism.

Cool Earth

Explore are delighted to support Cool Earth to reduce carbon emissions through preventing the illegal deforestation of the South America rainforest. One of the top sources of global carbon emissions, rainforest deforestation equivalent to the USA's annual emissions, it also destroys flora and fauna, sometimes to the point of extinction. It also degrades the lives and communities of the 350 million residents of the rainforest.

Cool Earth prevents the deforestation through its support of local communities as forest guardians and by focussing on areas in immediate danger of deforestation. It has so far protected over 350,000 acres of rainforest, with each acre saving an emission of 260 tons of CO2, as well as protecting rare animals and plants. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year. In addition to mitigating emissions, when you travel with Explore, you are helping to protect the source of 20% of the world's fresh water and oxygen, as well as the livelihoods of the 1.6 billion people who are reliant on the rainforest. www.coolearth.org

Earth Matters

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2013 and 31st December 2014.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2014 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2014. 2015/16 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2015.

These tour notes were printed on 10/03/2014 04:26:29