

Cycling Fusion Sicily Bike Tour

A Mediterranean Bike Journey
through Western Sicily



After a start in Palermo, the cultural capital of Sicily, we have planned 5 days of riding along the coast east of Palermo, and in the Madonie Mountains. We will be based in the quaint coastal village of Cefalù. The rides are suitable for intermediate to advanced riders. You will get full van assistance for riders and filming.

fitness



scenery



culture



food / wine



7 days / 6 nights (6 days of riding)
May 23 - May 29, 2021

Highlights

- 1- Palermo and its Arab-Norman architecture - UNESCO World Heritage Site
- 2- Duomo of Cefalù - UNESCO World Heritage Site
- 3- Lively Cefalù center and beaches
- 4- Swim in the blue Mediterranean waters
- 5- Parco delle Madonie mountains
- 6- Stunning cycling along on secondary roads
- 7- A lesser traveled, bucolic Sicily
- 8- Great Sicilian food, including freshly caught seafood

Description

The largest island in the Mediterranean is arguably the most beautiful and certainly the most dense with history and humanity. Sicily's complex culture is matched only by its stunning natural beauty and the incredible, diverse landscape: rolling hills and valleys swathed in grapevines, miles of aquamarine coastline and a series of archipelagos that can be reached via a quick boat ride. We will pedal back in time to a colorful and enigmatic past that has never left the island. With Tourissimo and Cycling Fusion, you will see (and taste) the real Sicily.

This seductive Mediterranean island has lured conquerors and visitors for centuries. Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and Normans have all contributed to the many layers of its vibrant culture. We'll steep ourselves in the sights, scents and flavors of the western part of Sicily, an area less exploited by tourism. We'll swim in pristine waters, and sample the unique flavors.

The cuisine in Sicily is different from the rest of Italy because of the various cultures it has been exposed to. Dinner in Sicily usually consists of vegetables (tomatoes, eggplants, artichokes), plenty of seafood, and yes, lots of pasta and olive oil. Its lemons, oranges, figs, almonds and apricots are among the best in the world.

Cefalù

(Ras Melkart in phoenician, Κεφαλοῖδιον in greek, Cephaloedium in latin, Gafludi in arabic, Cifalù in sicilian). It is located on the northern coast about 48 mls from Palermo. It sits at the foot of a rocky spur called "la Rocca di Cefalù."

The village is part of the Madonie Park. Its duomo has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. According to legend, the Duomo of Cefalù was erected after a vote made by Ruggero II who, along with his crew, was able to survive a storm and land on the shore of a village.

But the real reasons are probably politics and defense. In fact, its position and fortified walls would suggest so. The historical center shows a typical medieval layout with narrow streets and stone-paved roads.

The main construction material is limestone coming from the Rocca of Cefalù.



heat

min:
62 F
max:
75 F



rain

4%
Probab.



wind

Beppe Salerno Co-Founder



It is a great pleasure to host you on this special tour of Sicily! When I started as a bike tour guide in 2000, it was hard to imagine that active travel would become my career years later. We started Tourissimo because we pride ourselves on being the experts at what we do, where we do it. People like you look for phenomenal experiences, and to package that into a week-long vacation requires expertise. We know what that should look and feel like, and we know how to create it.

What's Included

- Bianchi bikes (choice carbon road or hybrid)
- GPS navigation
- Three or more professional tour guides throughout the program
- All accommodations with breakfast
- All lunches and five dinners
- House wine with dinner
- Guided tour of Palermo markets
- Support vehicle during the tour and luggage transfer
- Shuttle at the beginning and at the end of the tour
- All activities mentioned in the day-by-day description
- Laundering of cycling gear (twice)

What's Not Included

- Airfare
- Hotel pre-night in Palermo
- Personal expenses such as mini bar
- Guide gratuity
- Ebike upgrade

Price

USD 2,685

Private room (single supplement) USD 2,995



The Tourissimo Experience

Tourissimo is about meaningful, authentic experiences that are also educational, yet fun! In designing a tour, and while on tour, putting the learning experience at the center is what makes Tourissimo different. Our tour designers and guides know how to deliver those moments that enrich a vacation and yourself.

Ability Level

The level of the rides have been designed according to the fitness level of an fit recreational rider.

Tourissimo uses a 3-level scale and this tour would be rated Active, or level two and Athletic, or level 3. The terrain is generally undulated with climbs of 1 to 4 miles. On some days, Tourissimo will offer more than one option and the riders can choose to ride longer and harder if they wish. Ebikes available upon request.

Daily Itinerary

We shuttle to Aspra, a fishing village of Arab origin on the Gulf of Palermo. Aspra used to be known for its quarries, which provided a moderately-hard limestone mineral that was cut into blocks and then shipped all over Sicily. We go around the peninsula dominated by Mount Calafano until we reach another fishing village: Porticello. Termini Imerese is about halfway and it's our planned gelato stop. Do not miss the view of Cefalù as you enter the last 3 miles. We will have lunch with fresh seafood upon reaching beautiful Cefalù.



Day One

Aspra - Cefalù

Daily Mileage

40

Type of riding

Rolling

Meals included

LD

Hotel

Riva del Sole

Day Two

Cefalù - Castelbuono

Daily Mileage

45 (shorter option available)

Type of riding

Mountains

Meals included

BLD

Hotel

Riva del Sole

Today's ride in the Madonie Mountains takes us to the charming village of Castelbuono where we will regroup and refuel with local specialties at the celebrated Fiasconaro bar and pastry shop. The Madonie park is a true naturalistic paradise. We ride through a dense forest of beech trees and birch trees, and little villages. Real mountains with peaks of 6,000 ft are just a few miles from the coast. When you are back make sure to check out the Cefalù cathedral (UNESCO site).

Daily Itinerary

Today we have a big ride. After breakfast, we head to the Madonie Mountains Park. It is a ride of approximately 57 mls with an elevation gain just over 6,000 ft. The views are stunning, and we cross pristine meadows and sleepy villages along the way. After Collesano we climb some more to our picnic lunch at Piano Zucchi. All of these mountain roads were made famous by the Targa Florio open-road endurance race. Started in 1906 (the oldest official car race), by the mid-1920s, the Targa Florio had become one of Europe's most important races, as neither the 24 Hours of Le Mans nor the Mille Miglia had been established yet. Return to Cefalù in time to shower take a stroll and have dinner. We've earned a big gelato!



Today's ride heads east towards Milazzo (away from Palermo). It's an out-and-back ride with then option to add one climb on the way back. Santo Stefano di Camastra, along with a few others in Sicily, is a town known for its ceramics painted in bright colors. We'll make it back to Cefalù to allow time for some shopping, packing and final celebrations.

Day Three

Collesano - Piano Zucchi

Daily Mileage

57 (shorter option available)

Type of riding

Mountains

Meals included

BLD

Hotel

Riva del Sole

Day Four

Cefalù - Sant Stefano di Camastra

Daily Mileage

41

Type of riding

Flat and Rolling

Meals included

BLD

Hotel

Riva del Sole

Daily Itinerary

This ride takes us back to the 2017 Giro d'Italia with the Cefalù - Etna stage. We won't make it all the way to Mount Etna but it will be visible and very close.

The guides will describe the ride options, shortcuts, and van support during the ride overview.

The ride follows the coast for a nice warm-up, and when we arrive in Acquadolci we find ourselves at a fork. We head towards San Fratello to tackle a long and steady climb up Portella Femmina Morta, the top of the climb. This will be the highest point we reach on our Sicilian tour at 5,000 ft (1524 mt). There will be a midpoint regroup at San Fratello for those not making it to the top.

After some recovery time, pack up as tomorrow we move to Palermo.

A stroll in the center is the proper farewell to Cefalù.

Day Five

Cefalù - Portella Femmina Morta

Daily Mileage

44, 60, 90, or 115

Type of riding

Steady climb

Meals included

BLD

Hotel

Riva del Sole



Daily Itinerary

Palermo is the cultural center of Sicily and is known for its architecture, which has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. This morning we've planned a "street food" tour through the Capo Market and the Vucciria Market. It doesn't get more authentic than that! Besides giving an insight into the Sicilian cuisine, our guide provides historical information on the monuments and churches along the walk and shares with us the most intimate secrets of local habits.

In the afternoon, we have an optional ride that reaches Mondello, which is the beach resort of locals. Our goal is to climb the iconic Monte Pellegrino and to enjoy the view of Palermo from there. It is 606 meters (1,970 ft) high with panoramic views of the city, the surrounding mountains and the Tyrrhenian Sea. In his book, *Travels in Italy*, Goethe described Monte Pellegrino as the most beautiful promontory in the world. That might be an exaggeration but you can be the judge. For sure the mountain is very dear to locals because it is home to the sanctuary of Saint Rosalia, the patron saint of Palermo. We continue along the coast to Terrasini where we can have lunch before heading back (going around Mt Pellegrino this time). Dinner on your own (ask your guides for recommendations).



After breakfast you will be transferred to the Palermo airport according to your travel plans and flight schedule.

Day Six
Palermo

Daily Mileage
40

Type of riding
Steady climb

Meals included
BL

Hotel
TBD

Day Seven
Departure

Meals included
B

Food and Wine

Sicilian cuisine shows traces of all of the cultures which established themselves on the island over the last two millennia. Although its cuisine has a lot in common with mainland Italian cuisine, Sicilian food also has Greek, Spanish, French and Arab influences. The use of apricots, sugar, citrus, sweet melons, rice, saffron, raisins, nutmeg, clove, pepper, pine nuts, cinnamon (along with fried preparations) is a sign of Arab influences from the Arab domination of Sicily in the 10th and 11th centuries. Normans influences are also found, such as in the fondness for meat dishes. Later, the Spanish introduced numerous items from the New World, including cocoa, corn, peppers, and tomatoes. In Catania, on the east coast, initially settled by Greek colonists, fish, olives, broad beans, pistachio and fresh vegetables are preferred instead. Much of the island's cuisine encourages the use of fresh vegetables such as eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes, and fish such as tuna, cuttlefish, and swordfish.

In Trapani, in the extreme western corner of the island, North African influences are clear in the use of couscous. Sicily is a wine-lover's paradise, such is the variety, complexity and abundance of Bacchus' unique gift! There are 23 DOC zones in Sicily: Alcamo, Contea di Sclafani, Contessa Entellina, Delia Nivolelli, Etna, Erice, Etna, Faro, Malvasia delle Lipari, Mamertino di Milazzo, Marsala, Menfi, Monreale, Moscato di Noto, Moscato di Pantelleria, Passito di Pantelleria, Moscato di Siracusa, Riesi, Salaparuta, Sambuca di Sicilia, Santa Margherita di Belice, Sciacca and Vittoria. Many grape types are grown, used either in purezza (single grape variety wines), or blended. Some have been around for centuries while others are more recent imports. The following are some of the main varieties: red grapes - Nero D'Avola, Nerello Mascalese, Nerello Mantellato, Perricone, Frappato, Calabrese and the more recently introduced Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Shiraz (Syrah); white grapes - Cataratto, Grecanico, Grillo, Inzolia, Zibibbo, Damaschino, Trebbiano, Ausonica, Moscato Bianco, Carricante, Corinto Nero and the more recently introduced Chardonnay, Viognier and Fiano. Sicily has the most Slow Food Presidia (local projects) of all of the Italian regions. That means that the island has lots to offer in terms of gastronomical discoveries ranging from greens and vegetables to cheese and artisanal bread. Among a few that we will experience are Trapani Sea Salt, The Menfi Artichoke and the Belice Vastedda that is Italy's only stretched-curd sheep's milk cheese.

Arriving and Departing

Airport - Palermo (airport code PMO)

Arrival - Private group transfer by Tourissimo from the airport to the first Hotel.

Departure - Private group transfer by Tourissimo from last hotel to the airport.

While as accurate as possible at the time of creation, this program should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and tour routing, rather than an inflexible schedule.

Very occasionally events that are out of our control mean we have to make some changes, but we'll ensure you still have the best time!

We will do our best to ensure that any change is communicated as soon as possible.

Should our first choice hotels not be available due to special events, limited space, renovation, we will offer alternatives of the same standard or superior, whenever possible.