



## Tour of Sicily from Catania Special St. Agatha Feast – 4 Days (#19897)

**Note:** Price printed on this PDF is valid until **13-10-2024** and is subject to change without notice due to Partner changes and currency fluctuations

### Overview

GUARANTEED DEPARTURE ON FEBRUARY 3RD 2025.

A magical journey to celebrate St. Agatha Feast .

Organized group itinerary with stays in 4\* hotels to discover the most significant places on the island.

### Trip Highlights

Catania

### Detailed Itinerary

Day 01

DAY 1 – MONDAY 2/03: CATANIA



Individual arrival to the hotel in the charming city of Catania (optional private transfer on request). Today it starts in Catania the celebration in honour of its Saint Patron in a ritual that has been handed down for thousands of years. You will experience the third most famous festival in the world, a blend of traditions and spirituality! This is the night thousands of devotees wearing the traditional white “Sacco” (a votive white canvas gown up to the ankle and tightened at the waist by a cord) gather in the Cathedral square to honour St. Agatha with orchestral music, songs and amazing fireworks! For those who would like to, we offer our guests as a supplementary service, the possibility to enjoy this special night living a unique experience from the terrace of a nearby hotel sipping a glass of champagne! Dinner on your own and overnight in hotel.

**Meal:** No Meal

### Day 02

### DAY 2 – TUESDAY 2/04: ETNA – TAORMINA – CATANIA

This morning after a short visit of the famous “pescheria” (the ancient fish market) in Catania, the tour will continue with an excursion to the Mount Etna, the highest (c. 3350m) volcano in Europe and one of the largest and most active in the world, nowadays UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its regional park protects 59.000 hectares of unique geology, flora and fauna, villages and farms, and traditional methods of forestry, beekeeping, wine manufacture, stonework and carpentry. Views of stunning landscapes will amaze you heading to Refugio Sapienza. You will reach the “Crateri Silvestri”, small volcanic cones now inactive, surrounded by ancient lava flows. The view beyond the mountain’s hundreds of subsidiary cones and craters, can extend across the whole of Sicily, the Aeolian islands and Calabria. The spectacle is unique! You will have the chance to enjoy the local homemade honey and some typical products of the area. The tour continues towards Taormina where you will have lunch in a lovely restaurant in the historic centre of the city. Taormina is a charming town renowned for its magnificent position above the sea commanding a celebrated view of Etna. Visit of Taormina’s fascinating Greek theatre which will leave you breathless for its commanding view on Giardini Naxos Bay and the Etna Mountain! Free time for a nice walk among the picturesque Medieval typical narrow streets, to go shopping and looking around the local handicrafts. The day will end with an overview of the beautiful Riviera Dei Ciclopi. Back in Catania to experience the exciting atmosphere of the procession of St. Agatha. The coffin – adorned with red carnations symbolizing martyrdom - in this day walks along the places connected to her life and martyr. There are four-thousand or five-thousand devotees that pull the heavy “fercolo”. All of them wearing the traditional “Sacco”, the black velvet hat and the white gloves drag in the crowd the fercolo which, empty, weighs 17 tons but, weighed down by the casket, the bust and loaded with huge candles, can weigh up to 30 quintals. At a rhythmic pace they cry out: "citizens, viva Sant'Agata"! The "tour" ends late at night when the fercolo returns to the Cathedral. Dinner on your own and overnight in hotel.



### Day 03

### DAY 3 – WEDNESDAY 2/05: CATANIA

This day is dedicated to the visit of Catania and to the feast of St. Agatha. Catania's historical centre with its original Baroque style and its unique streets built with black lava stone is stated UNESCO World Heritage Site. The colour scheme of the city-centre buildings is black and dark grey, relieved with white limestone details around doors and windows. The effect is extremely elegant! The guided walking tour will start from the scenic Duomo square with its magnificent Cathedral and the famous "Liotru" statue, antique lava-stone elephant, symbol of the city. Not far from here we will reach University Square, and we will have a walk along the splendid baroque Via Dei Crociferi, the most representative 18th century street in Catania, where we will admire the famous S. Benedict Monastery, UNESCO World Heritage Site. Continuing the visit enjoy a light lunch in a historical bar of the city centre to taste the local street food and the typical "minnuzze". Free afternoon to enjoy the feast. On this day the city centre is a riot of colours and lights dedicated to the procession of the rich and sumptuous fercolo of St Agatha – saint patron of Catania - that is carried around the main streets of the city by the devotees. You will experience the exciting trails of devotees who follow the fercolo in procession, wearing the traditional white "sacco" and carrying on their shoulders heavy candles lit in sign of devotion. You'll admire the extraordinary beauty of the silver reliquary and bust made for the virgin martyr and decorated with fresh white carnations; the royal crown belonged to King Richard the Lionheart and offered by the king to the Saint in 1191 in occasion of his stay in Sicily. It is of rare beauty the amazing bust in embossed silver (inside which is the chest of the Saint) embellished with enamels and precious stones created in the 14th century. It is a masterpiece of high jewellery and of considerable artistic value to which they have been added over the millennia the votive gifts of precious goldsmith and the ex-votos offered to the martyr by the devotees. You will treasure the magic atmosphere that you breathe in the streets of the city centre pervaded by the scents of freshly crystallized nougat and cotton candy... We suggest you not to miss the traditional parade of the 12 "candelore" in Duomo square - majestic wooden buildings richly carved and gilded on the surface which symbolize "the light of the world" against the darkness of night. Just think they weigh from 400 up to 900 kilos, and they are carried on the shoulder of 4 or 12 men, depending on their weight. Dinner on your own and overnight in hotel.

### Day 04

### DAY 4 – THURSDAY 2/06: CATANIA

Breakfast in hotel and end of services. We strongly recommend for those who were willing, to experience the thrilling singing of the cloistered nuns greeting St. Agatha in front of San Benedetto Monastery (behind the back of your hotel) before she goes back to the Cathedral to be placed in the room from which she will come out next year. This will be your personal greeting to the Saint and your "arrivederci" to Catania!

**Meal:** Breakfast



### **Inclusions**

Multilingual Tour leader and professional travel guide (English, Italian or Spanish) for the whole tour, from the 2nd day to the afternoon of the 3rd day, local guides or audio-guides where necessary.

Deluxe bus from day 2 to day 3

Whisper kit Crystal Sound for the whole trip: the latest generation, fast and light. It transmits the driving voice up to 150 meters away

Accommodation in charming 4 stars hotels mostly located in the city centre, international breakfast included:

Catania city centre: Il Principe Hotel 4\* or similar

3 international breakfasts, 2 lunches in famous restaurants to have a taste of Sicilian traditional cuisine

Visit of the main suggestive Unesco World Heritage Sites: Etna, Catania city centre

Tasting of Sicilian typical products:

Etna (day 2) visit of a beekeeping honey company and honey tasting

Catania (day 3) tasting of Sicilian “minnuzze”

### **Exclusions**

Transfers in/out

Meals not included by the program

Beverages

Entrance fees at monuments/museums

City taxes (where compulsory)

Anything not specified under “The rate includes”

### **Note**

Accommodation in charming 4 stars hotels mostly located in the city centre, international breakfast included:

Catania city centre: Il Principe Hotel 4\* or similar

- Supplement for Pre/Post-night in hotel in Catania (Bed and Breakfast treatment) rates available on request.
- Transfers Catania airport/hotel in Catania rates available on request.
- Assistance – Medical Expense Reimbursement – Luggage insurance – Travel Cancellation Expenses Insurance: on request.

For organizational reasons or due to force majeure the itinerary may be modified.



EXTRA FEES ENTRANCES TO BE CONFIRMED:

Taormina Greek theatre AUD 30 p.p

## Program Touring / Guide

Escorted Experience

## Fixed Departure

03 Feb, 2025

4 Star

AUD 1,353 P P twin share

AUD 1,709 P P single

AVAILABLE

