

BlueBee Odysseys

*Discover * Restore * Renew*

Fall Odyssey to Sicily

October 17-24, 2017

Small adjustments will be made to the itinerary over the next few months.

Sicily is at the crossroads of Europe, Africa and Asia, a place the ancients called the “middle of the earth.” Sicilian culture, architecture, food, and myths mirror this. This odyssey will offer the time to restore and renew yourself in the peacefulness of our lodging at B & B Letizia in the medieval village of Castelbuono. Castelbuono is located amidst ash and chestnut forests, with the Madonie Mountains on one side and the Tyrrhenian Sea in front. Castelbuono is known for its culinary excellence and a wide variety of handicrafts; wood and wrought iron, embroidery, and lace. There will be ample free time to wander the streets, visit cafes for an espresso or simply sit in the town square with a glass of wine and people watch.

We are very fortunate to be there during the three day Fungi Festival this year. You will have a direct experience of learning about local customs, arts and crafts, music, and tastings of the many types of locally foraged mushroom based recipes and wines.

Day 1 Tuesday 10/17/17

Palermo, group gathers by 12 pm at the B&B in Palermo, check in.

Diane does welcoming experience for the group.

Afternoon stroll in Palermo, see Palermo Cathedral with its Arabic style facade, Quattro Canti, Teatro Massimo - third largest opera house in Europe, Piazza Pretoria-Renaissance style fountain with sculptures.

Free time in the evening.

L

Day 2 Wednesday 10/18/17

Breakfast, gentle yoga and meditation with Diane and Char

Carmelina and Peter, our guides, and chef Mimmo Zito will meet us at the B&B

There is perhaps no better way to understand a culture than through the cuisine.

The first part of this day is in preparation for the authentic Sicilian cooking course of tomorrow, taught by chef Mimmo Zito. Mimmo Zito will be teaching us traditional Sicilian recipes that have been passed down for centuries. He is also an enologist with a hobby of making organic wine! Mimmo was born and raised in Palermo and has a wonderful restaurant in the little village of Sant Ambrogio. While shopping in the bustling markets of Ballaro for the fresh ingredients of our cooking course, Mimmo will offer insight into the history of Sicilian food.

Lunch will be at a seafood restaurant on one of the less touristy streets of Palermo where local people eat. Later, we will drive to the Norman Cathedral of Monreale, a stunning UNESCO World Heritage site. Monreale represents the largest concentration of Norman, Arab and Byzantine art in one place.

Go to our B&B in Castelbuono. Guided tour of Castelbuono, Medieval castle

B, L

Day 3 Thursday 10/19/17

Breakfast, Gentle yoga, meditation with Diane and Char

This will be a very fun day of cooking, eating and lots of belly laughter.

Full day cooking course will be taught by chef, Mimmo Zito. It will consist of the preparation of a complete meal based on traditional Sicilian dishes: an antipasto (entrée), primo (1st course probably of pasta), main course and dessert. Later, we will visit a local oil press.

B, L

Day 4 Friday 10/20/17

Breakfast, Gentle yoga, meditation with Char and Diane

Journey to the small village of Castel di Tusa. There is a castle that overlooks the town is 600 meters above sea level. Nearby is the Greco-Roman ruin of Halasea. The Greeks founded it in the 5th century BC. There is a panoramic view of the sea and even the Aeolian Islands can be seen on sunny days. You can see the remains of the agora, the Greek marketplace and enormous walls. A small museum displays finds from the site. Downhill near the site entrance are the remains of a Colombarium, a 2nd-century Roman necropolis with some well-preserved stonework. A small museum displays finds from the site.

We will walk through an open-air sculpture park, the Fiumara d'Arte, a collection of monumental sculptures by contemporary artists which complement the majestic surrounding landscape.

Fungi Festival in Castelbuono - explore and shop,

Dinner at Nangalarruni

B,D

Day 5 Saturday 10/21/17

Breakfast, Gentle yoga, meditation with Char and Diane

The tradition of cheese making is still very strong in Sicily. Goats, sheep and cows produce milk that is flavored by the wild herbs; thyme, fennel, sorrel, basil, oregano, mint and rosemary, on which the animals feed. The shepherds use the milk to make a vast variety of cheeses, including pecorino, ricotta, and caciocavallo.

We will visit a local shepherd and learn how cheese is made in the traditional way. You will be able to taste the various stages of the cheese making.

Lunch in Isnello

Free late afternoon and evening in Castelbuono

B, L

Day 6 Sunday 10/22/17

Breakfast, Gentle yoga, meditation with Diane and Char

Our guide will discuss village life, traditions, architecture and environment.

We will drive to Cefalu; visit the Cefalu Cathedral, 1131 AD, and recently designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

There are several options after the guided tour of Cefalu.

1. There is an optional moderate level walk up to the Rock or La Rocca; a place that the Phoenicians called the Hercules promontory. Nearby is a temple of the Goddess Diana/Artemis, 9th century BC. Artemis is the prime goddess of Greek mythology, the Goddess of Wild Animals, representing all of nature. The views are stunning as you hike up to top.
2. You may go to the beach and relax.
3. You may shop. Cefalu has many shops on charming side streets that are fun to visit.

Cefalu lunch

B, L

Day 7 Monday 10/23/17

Breakfast, Gentle yoga, meditation

A gentle hike to one of Sicily's great natural wonders awaits you on Piano Pomo. More than 200 holly trees (*Ilex aquifolium*), up to 300 years old, have grown into tight-knit clusters and are unique in Italy. From November onwards these evergreen hollies are covered with shiny red berries. The ascent of 325m begins at Piano Sempria and winds through holm oak woods where you will find an ancient 800 year old moss covered oak.

Lunch at Rifugio in Piano Sempria

Free Afternoon

B, L

Day 8 Tuesday 10/24/17

Departure at a designated time, possibly 6am, TBD, early for everyone to catch flights in Palermo to their next destination.