

Sicily, Etna, Taormina and Acireale
An 8-day self-guided cycling vacation

Code tour: ITSIC01C



A cycling tour in Sicily, the biggest and most enchanting island of the Mediterranean, means exploring a sea-land rich in traditions, the taste of the excellent Sicilian cuisine, white beaches with a deep blue colour as a background, places rich in history and archeologic paths that witness thousands of years of history and dominations. This journey tells you about the fascinating volcano that made the history of Sicily. The Etna is the biggest and most active volcano in Europe. It is covered with a varied vegetation starting at sea level with citrus groves, olive groves and pistachios to oaks, chestnuts and pines and to finish with, above 2200, with shrubby vegetation. You cycle in the shade of the Etna, within natural parks (Etna, Alcantara and Natural reserve Forre Laviche del Simeto). There is a very evocative atmosphere as you cycle through authentic and friendly villages like the medieval town Randazzo once known as the town of hundred churches. Very suggestive is the Via degli Archi. Certainly a highlight of this tour is Taormina, the pearl of the Ionian Sea with its ancient Greek theatre, which offers a stunning panorama of the sea and the surrounding hills. Not less interesting are Castiglione di Sicilia and the baroque city of Acireale, famous for its Carneval. It is also a journey that flatters your palate. The Sicilian kitchen is rich and varied with local delicacies such as arancini, the caponata, pasta con le sarde and naturally sweets dessert and cakes like cannoli and cassata made of pistachio, the ricotta cheese and dried fruit.

Sicilia



Period: Every Saturday from 05/03 to 05/11/2022

Participants: Minimum 2 persons, solo traveller on request

Level: 2,5

Medium till difficult. Cycling in a hilly landscape. Flat sections are alternating with some challenging climbs. Cycle experience is needed and good physical condition. Cycling on asphalted and dirt roads.

Daily distances are between 20 km / 12,4 mi and 50 km / 31 mi.

Total distance: 205 km / 127,4 miles

Program in short:

Day 1 Arrival at Nicolosi

Day 2 Nicolosi - Etna ring route (20 km / 12,4 mi)

Day 3 Nicolosi - Bronte (49 km / 30 mi)

Day 4 Bronte - Randazzo (30 km / 18,6 mi or 36 km / 22,3 mi)

Day 5 Randazzo - Giardini Naxos (44 km / 27,3 mi)

Day 6 Giardini Naxos ring route (20 km / 12,4 mi)

Day 7 Giardini Naxos - Acitrezza (37 km / 23 mi)

Day 8 End of tour



Program day by day

Day 1 Arrival in hotel in Nicolosi

Arrival at your hotel in Nicolosi. In the late afternoon, you will receive bikes and have a briefing with a local representative. Nicolosi is a little village situated at the foot of Etna, 700 m. of altitude. Nicolosi boasts important monuments like a Benedictine Monastery dating back to the 12th century, S.Nicolò l'Arena.

Overnight with breakfast in Nicolosi

Day 2 Nicolosi - Etna - Nicolosi

Today, a nice cycling around the Etna. It is volcanic complex originated in the quaternary and is the highest active volcano in the Eurasian Plate. Its frequent eruptions throughout history have changed, sometimes even deeply, the surrounding landscape, coming several times to threaten the populations that have settled around it over the millennia. The great writer Leonardo Sciascia talked about Etna with the following words: "he is like a huge house cat who quietly roars and sometimes wakes up, yawns, with lazy sluggish stretching and, with a distracted paw, now covers a valley, now another, erasing villages, vineyards and gardens".

The sporty cyclist among us can go up by bike or there is an alternative to go up by local bus. You reach 'Rifugio Sapienza' (www.rifugiosapienza.com ; buses accept bikes) and from here individual tours to visit the Etna volcano starts. Special buses leave for visiting the top of the volcano with guides. Upon arrival at Rifugio Sapienza you can buy tickets for this excursion. Back to Nicolosi by bike and overnight.

If the weather is not good, you can take a local bus to Catania and visit this beautiful city situated at the foot of the Etna.

Overnight with breakfast in Nicolosi

Distance: 20 km /12,4 mi

Ascent & Descent: + 1209m - 1207m



Day 3 Nicolosi - Adrano - Bronte

Today the itinerary passes through Adrano, situated on the border of the natural park of the Etna. You have time to visit the historic centre and the Norman castle (11th century) of Adrano. You cross Ponte dei Saraceni, a stone bridge dating back to the 9th century on river Simeto and the natural reserve 'Forre laviche del Simeto', a long succession of waterfalls, rapids, lakes and gorges that the river Simeto created by flowing between the basaltic lavas of an ancient Etna melt. Your overnight is in Bronte, the city of pistachio.

Overnight with breakfast in Bronte

Distance: 49 km /30 mi

Ascent & Descent: + 497m - 662m

Day 4 Bronte - Maniace - Randazzo

You cycle to Maniace to visit the Castle of Orazio Nelson and the Norman abbey of S.Maria di Maniace (12th century). In the next days, you will cycle along the riviera of Lemons, which extends from Acireale and passes through Aci Catena up to Aci Castello. In the past, this area was known for its warm waters and the legend of God River Acis and nymph Galatea (for this, many of this places are called "Aci". This area, between the Ionian Sea and the Etna, is a plateau created by lava and magma that descends gently to the fertile plains of Catania, through numerous citrus plantations: we recommend to try the delicious local limoncello.

Your accommodation for the night is in Randazzo, a small medieval town on the slopes of Etna, with an interesting historic centre. It is worth visiting the archeologic museum and the civic museum of natural science.

Overnight with breakfast in Randazzo

Distance: 30 km /18,6 mi or 36 km /22,3 mi

Ascent & Descent: + 481m - 244m or + 667m - 874m

Day 5 Randazzo - Castiglione- Gola dell'Alcantara - Giardini di Naxos

Today an easy downhill ride is waiting for you. You leave Randazzo cycling along the 'strada del Vino' (a wine route) and of course, you will have the opportunity to taste some of the excellent wines from the vineyards on the sunny slopes of Etna and to try some local specialties at a winery. After this you will visit the impressive gorges of Alcantara, which in some places reach a depth of 25m. The widest parts of the gorge are only 4-5m wide, narrowing to 2m at some points. The gorges mark the course of the Alcantara river over the years. Your overnight stay is in the town of Giardini Naxos, site of the first Greek colony on Sicily, on the Ionian coast, where you might enjoy a regenerating bath in its splendid blue waters.

Overnight with breakfast in Giardini Naxos

Distance: 44 km /27,3 mi

Ascent & Descent: + 251m - 1005m

Day 6 Giardini Naxos - Taormina - Giardini Naxos

This morning you have the opportunity to visit the excavations of ancient Naxos. This large archaeological area has an interesting museum. After your visit, you cycle to Taormina to discover its natural and historical beauties. Taormina has often been called the terrace of the nobility, because in the seventeenth century famous and noble people, both Italians, Germans and English people, spent here their holidays. Only to nominate: William II, Edward VII, the king of Siam and Tonkin, the Rothschild's, the Morgan's, the Krupp's ...

Anyone who visits Taormina, must certainly not forget to the highest part of town to visit the Greek theater of Hellenistic origin, but nowadays with a totally Roman aspect. It is the most important monument of the city, not only from a historical point of view but also geographically, given the beauty and the extraordinary nature of its position, from which you can enjoy an incomparable view. The theater is still used today for theatrical and musical performances, thanks to its excellent acoustics. Other places of interest in the medieval center are the Corvaja Palace, built on the ancient Roman Forum, the Saracen Castle, the Naumachia, the Cathedral dedicated to San Nicola, the elegant Palazzo dei Duchi di Santo Stefano and the square 'Piazza IX Aprile', the elegant "living room" of Taormina. Here there are bars where you can enjoy an excellent aperitif, observing the numerous street artists busy making portraits and landscapes. From the Gallery you have a splendid view of Mount Etna, the bay of Naxos and the Roman Theater.

Of course, you can also spend the day on the beach of Isola Bella. At the end of the day, you return to Giardini Naxos.

Overnight with breakfast in Giardini Naxos

Distance: 20 km /12,4 mi

Ascent & Descent: + 523m - 523m

Day 7 Giardini Naxos - Acitrezza

A last an easy ride along the Ionian coast, also known as "riviera of lemons" will take you, after a short climb to Acireale, whose baroque centre has earned world fame. Amongst the churches worthwhile visiting is the one of San Sebastiano with its ten statues of old

testament figures and the frescoes of the painter Paolo Vasta. But before reaching the town you will pass the natural reserve of Timpa with several predatory birds nest, and an undisturbed dense vegetation which grows luxuriant thanks to the springs that pour into the Ionian Sea. Overnight stay in Acitrezza

Overnight with breakfast in Acitrezza

Distance: 37 km /23 mi

Ascent & Descent: + 386m - 378m

Day 8 Departure after breakfast



Hotels:

*** stars and good B&B

Prices per person 2022:

In double room € 670

In single room € 860

Solo traveller € 960

Half board supplement € 180

High season supplement (July and August) € 90

City bike € 90

Hybrid bike € 110

E-bike € 160

Tandem € 190

Trailer (up to 40 kg) € 50

Included in the price:

- 7 nights in B&B and *** hotel with breakfast
- Luggage transport
- Detailed road book and other material (1 set per room)
- Informative (1 kit per room)
- 24 hour assistance
- Tour information

Not included in the price:

- The trip to Sicily
- Bus ticket or private transfer from Nicolosi to the Sapienza refuge
- Lunches and dinners
- Transfer to and from the airport
- City taxes
- Tastings and entrance tickets
- Helmet for the bike
- Everything that is not mentioned under 'included in the price'

Transfer (to be paid locally: min 2 - max. 4/5 pers. For more people, price on request)

- Catania - Nicolosi Airport € 35 p.p.
- Acireale - Catania Airport € 35 p.p.

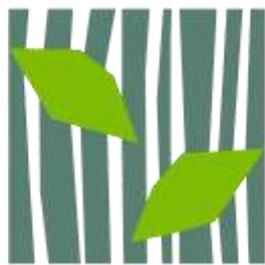
Reduction for children (overnight stay in a room with two adults):

0- 5: 100%

6-10: 50%

11-13: 25%

> 14: 10%



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