



**APPALACHIAN
MOUNTAIN CLUB**
SINCE 1876

Ultimate Sicily: Hiking, History, Culture & Cuisine
April 2-16, 2026
Trip #2609



Cefalu Harbor at dawn [\[courtesy mario cutroneo\]](#)

Trip Overview

As the poet Goethe wrote, "To have seen Italy without having seen Sicily is not to have seen Italy at all, for Sicily is the clue to everything." Blessed with abundant sunshine and the dramatic juxtaposition of mountains and sea, Sicily's geographical location in the center of the Mediterranean induces many of its unique qualities. Located midway between the Arabic world, Northern Africa and the European continent, it still reveals the deep physical and cultural imprints of many ancient civilizations - Greek, Roman, Phoenician, Spanish, Arabic, and Norman.

Map of Sicily



Our custom itinerary explores the uniqueness of Sicily in all its dimensions. Excellent hikes of moderate duration are combined with visits to sites of historical, archaeological, architectural and cultural significance. We visit both iconic destinations and little-known gems. We travel by private bus and stay in unique three or four star accommodations in beautiful, small towns. We will enjoy the tastes of Sicily that, as in ancient times, continue to rely on the bounty of the ocean and island-grown ingredients. The trip is packed with experiences, but is never rushed.

Below are the destination highlights:

- **Palermo, Erice and Sicily's north-west:** Sicily's capital city, Palermo, has been a cultural melting pot for millennia. Traces of the Roman, Byzantine, Arab and Norman empires can be seen in the city's architecture, culture and traditions. The small town of Erice is situated atop a high hill overlooking the coast. Surrounded by ancient defensive walls and crowned with a 12th-century castle, the town's medieval era street layout is among the best-preserved in Europe.
- **Madonie and Nebrodi Regional Parks:** From their foothills near sea level to peaks over 5,500 feet high, these two neighboring parks provide habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna – the area is Sicily's richest in terms of biodiversity. Madonie and Nebrodi Regional Parks are home not only to wilderness and wildlife; within this rugged region are numerous centuries old villages where the lifestyle is traditional, the sense of history palpable and the cuisine exceptional.
- **The Aeolian Islands:** Just off Sicily's NE coast lie the seven islands of the Aeolian archipelago: Vulcano, Lipari, Salina, Panarea, Stromboli, Filicudi and Alicudi. Sparsely populated, naturally beautiful and geographically diverse, the Aeolian Islands were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2000.

- **Mt Etna:** More than 10,000 feet high, Etna is Italy's highest peak outside of the Alps, and the largest active volcano in Europe.
- **Ortigia/Siracusa:** An ancient town on a tiny island, was in 500 BC among the largest cities of the Mediterranean world. Not far away is **Villa Romana del Casale**, a palace site which contains one of the finest collections of Roman mosaics.

Trip Difficulty

The trip is rated 4 - [moderate](#). Typically we will hike 5-8 miles, ascend/descend 1,000'-1,500' in a book time [excludes all breaks] of 3-4.5 hours. The trails are rough and unpaved. Hiking boots are essential. Hiking poles are recommended. A complete gear list will be provided upon acceptance.

Daily Itinerary - Local guides accompany us on twelve days, all days except days 1 and 6.

Leave USA on Wednesday, April 1 or earlier to arrive in Palermo on Thursday, April 2 (Day 1).

Day 1 Thursday, 2 April: Palermo 5pm: Group rendezvous at the accommodation (hotel check-in is from 2pm onward). After introducing ourselves, we'll head out and join the locals in a timeless Italian Saturday tradition, the *passeggiata*, evening stroll. We'll walk through Palermo's historic center, enjoy an *aperitivo* along the way, then sit down to dinner at a specially chosen restaurant.

Accommodation: Hotel Palazzo Brunaccini (4-star), Palermo www.palazzobrunaccini.it/en/

Meals included: dinner



Temple of Segesta [\[courtesy Radek Kucharski\]](#)

Day 2 Friday, 3 April: Palermo, Erice and Sicily's north-west In the morning, an expert guided tour will provide an overview of Sicily's history and that of Palermo in particular. At midday we'll drive (1 hour 15 min) to northwest Sicily and lunch in the village of Scopello. From there we'll hike through Zingaro Nature Reserve, one of the only road free stretches of coast in all of Sicily. At the end of the hike we'll drive (1 hour) to Erice, known as one of Italy's most beautiful small towns. Our accommodation is a former convent, built in 1423. We'll walk to dinner via the hilltop public gardens to view the full moon rising over the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Accommodation: Il Carmine Hotel (3-star), Erice www.ilcarmine.com

Meals included: breakfast, dinner

Hike details: 6 miles, 735' ascent, 790' descent, 2.5 hours



Day 3 Saturday 4 April: Erice and Segesta This morning's walk starts in Erice's labyrinth of medieval-era streets. Cobble stoned lanes lead through covered passageways to small piazzas, well-tended gardens and spectacular viewpoints. The hike continues outside the town walls, around the hillside with great views of northwest Sicily. Hike details: 4 miles, 1150' ascent/descent, 2.5 hours

After lunch we'll drive (45 minutes each way) to the Segesta archaeological area, one of Sicily's must-sees. An expert historian guide will lead us through this well-preserved Ancient Greek temple – a site of human activity dating back at least to the 4th-century BC.

Accommodation: 2nd night at Il Carmine Hotel, Erice

Meals included: breakfast

Left photo: Street in Erice [courtesy Tommie Hansen]

Day 4 Sunday 5 April: Segesta and Madonie Regional Park

From Erice we'll drive (2 hours 30 minutes) to Madonie Regional Park, an area of isolated villages and farms amidst an impressive mountain wilderness. We'll have lunch in Isnello, a small village with ancient roots, then follow a trail

out through the wilderness to the ruins of a castle overlooking the valley. The hike ends in Gratteri, another ancient village in the mountains, with views stretching out across the countryside to the coast.

Accommodation: [Gratteri Resort](#) (4-star), Gratteri

Meals included: breakfast, dinner

Hike details 1) Isnello: 1.3 miles, 250' ascent/descent, 1.0 hours 2) Gratteri: 4 miles, 900' ascent/descent, 2.5 hours

Day 5 Monday, 6 April: Madonie Regional Park Today's walk follows ancient trails used by shepherds, pilgrims, traders and travelers for countless generations. A local guide will lead the way through this remote and seldom visited region, introducing the local culture, history, economy and lifestyle.

Accommodation: 2nd night in Gratteri Resort, Gratteri

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Hike details: 6.5 miles, 1,500' ascent/descent, 3.5 hours

Day 6 Tuesday, 7 April: Cefalù From the Madonie mountains we'll drive (30 minutes) to seaside Cefalù and a hike up La Rocca, the prominent hill directly above town. Almost completely surrounded by sheer cliffs, La Rocca's summit plateau has served as a natural fortress since prehistoric times. Free time to wander Cefalù's narrow lanes and enjoy lunch. At 4pm, we'll drive (1 hour 30 minutes) to Milazzo, the departure point for the ferries to the Aeolian Islands.

Accommodation: [Hotel Liberty Palace](#) (3-star), Milazzo

Meals included: breakfast, dinner

Hike details: 2.5 miles, 750' ascent/descent, 2.3 hours

Day 7 Wednesday, 8 April: The Aeolian Islands/Lipari An early start and a ferry ride (1 hour 30 minutes) will have us on the island of Lipari by 9.30am, and the start of short and long hikes connecting the island's villages, farms and wilderness areas. Hikers will be rewarded with great views over the islands of the Aeolian archipelago and Sicily's mainland. At 5pm we'll travel by ferry (30 minutes) to Salina, known as the garden island of the Aeolian archipelago. Olive groves, vineyards, caper vines and orchards of citrus trees cover the lower slopes of Salina's two towering volcanoes, both long extinct.

Accommodation: Hotel Ravesi (3-star), Salina www.hotelravesi.it

Meals included: breakfast, dinner

Hike details: 8 miles, 1,100' ascent/descent, 4.5 hours



Aeolian Islands [\[courtesy Salvo.do\]](#)

Day 8 Thursday, 9 April: The Aeolian Islands/Salina Today's hike takes us to the upper slopes of Salina's highest peak, Monte Fossa del Felci, and out to a viewpoint offering another great panorama of the Aeolian Islands.

Accommodation: 2nd night in Hotel Ravesi, Salina

Meals included: breakfast, lunch

Hike details: 7.5 miles, 2,000' ascent/descent, 4.5 hours

Day 9 Friday, 10 April: The Aeolian Islands/Salina A free morning on beautiful Salina. Relax and enjoy the hotel's comforts and views, stroll around the village of Malfa, hire a scooter and explore more of Salina. In the afternoon, we'll visit the picturesque villages of Lena and Pollara, and have dinner of locally sourced produce in an *agriturismo*, farm-restaurant.

Accommodation: 3rd night in Hotel Ravesi, Salina

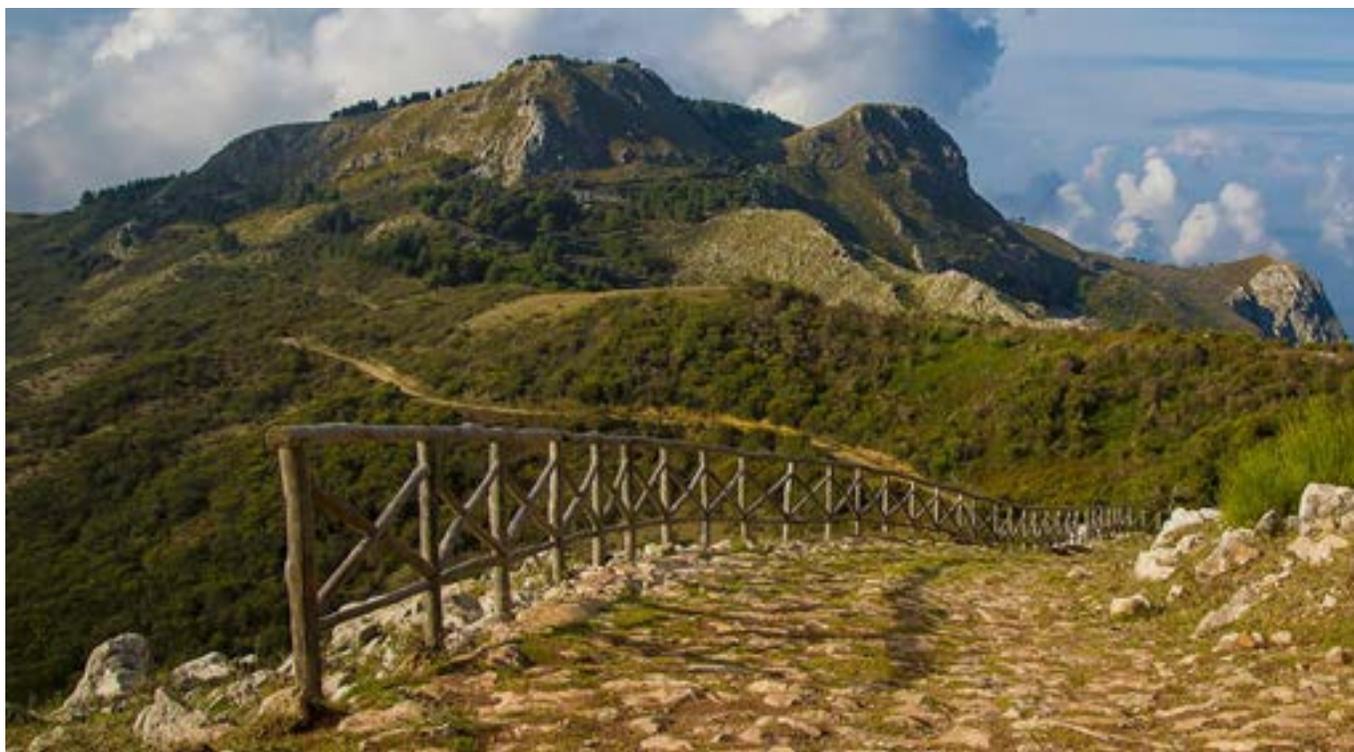
Meals included: breakfast, dinner

Day 10 Saturday, 11 April: Nebrodi Regional Park The mid-morning ferry trip (1 hour 30 minutes) to Milazzo is followed by a scenic drive (1 hour 45) to Nebrodi Regional Park, the largest protected area in Sicily. An afternoon hike is followed by a meal of local produce at our accommodation, a remote mountain inn.

Accommodation: Villa Miraglia (3-star), Nebrodi Regional Park www.relaisvillamiraglia.it/en/homepage/

Meals included: breakfast, dinner

Hike details: 5 miles, 700' ascent/descent, 2.5 hours



Nebrodi Park [courtesy Parco Nebrodi]

Day 11 Sunday, 12 April: Nebrodi Regional Park A day of unique hiking, history, cultural and culinary experiences.

Accommodation: 2nd night at Villa Miraglia, Nebrodi Regional Park

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Hike details: 8 miles, 1,500' ascent/descent, 4.5 hours



Mt Etna landscape [\[courtesy Radek Kucharski\]](#)

Day 12 Monday, 13 April: Etna From Nebrodi Regional Park we'll drive (1 hour 30 minutes) to the town of Linguaglossa and then higher up onto the slopes of Etna. An expert geologist-guide will lead us safely along trails to special features of the volcano – craters, fissures, fumaroles and lava flows – and explain more about this dynamic landscape. In the late afternoon a scenic drive (1 hour 30) brings us to the town of Syracuse and across a narrow waterway to its historic center, the small island of Ortigia.

Accommodation: Hotel Gutkowski, Ortigia (3-star) www.guthotel.it/en/home-english/

Meals included: breakfast

Hike details: 3 miles, 1,000' ascent/descent, 3 hours

Mt Etna spewing ash [[courtesy Andy Montgomery](#)]



Day 13 Tuesday 14 April: Noto and Sicily's South-East A day-trip through Sicily's southeast. We'll visit [Villa Romana del Casale](#), an archaeological site revealing an imperial Roman country house of great historic and artistic importance. Excavations have revealed it as one of the richest, largest, and varied collections of Roman mosaics in the world. We'll have lunch at a farm/winery restaurant and visit Noto, another of Italy's most beautiful small towns. Noto is notable for the extent of its baroque architecture, a result of the town's reconstruction in the early 18th-century following a devastating earthquake. Accommodation: 2nd night at Hotel Gutkowski, Ortigia
Meals included: breakfast, lunch



Mosaic in the Villa Romana del Casale [[courtesy Jerzy Strzelecki Wiki Commons](#)]

Day 14 Wednesday, 15 April: Syracuse and Ortigia An expert guided tour of historic Ortigia, a small island which is the historical center of Syracuse. We will have free time in the afternoon to enjoy markets, museums, galleries, piazzas, eateries, stores and local events. According to Wikipedia, "Syracuse [in Italian Siracusa] is notable for its rich Greek and Roman history, culture, amphitheatres, architecture, and as the birthplace and home of the pre-eminent mathematician and engineer Archimedes. This 2,700-year-old city played a key role in ancient times, when it was one of the major

powers of the Mediterranean world.” We’ll meet again at sunset for a stroll together to the final group meal of the tour.

Accommodation: 3rd night at Hotel Gutkowski, Ortigia

Meals included: breakfast, dinner

Right photo: Piazza Duomo-Siracusa [courtesy Guialia flickr]

Day 15 Thursday, 16 April:
Onward travel The trip ends with the drive (1 hour) from Ortigia to Catania International Airport, arriving at 11am
Accommodation: none
Meals included: breakfast

Accommodations, Meals and Transportation

We will stay in unique three star and four star accommodations. We will be transported by private coach and/or public ferries. All breakfasts, ten dinners, and four lunches are included. Lunches/dinners include water, local wines, and coffee.



Some background on Sicilian cuisine as provided by Wikipedia:

“Much of the island was initially settled by Greek colonists, who left a preference for fish, wheat, olives, grapes, broad beans, chickpeas, lentils, almonds, pistachios, and fresh vegetables. Arab influences on Sicilian cuisine trace to the Arab domination of Sicily in the 10th and early 11th centuries, and include the use of sugar, citrus, rice, raisins, pine nuts and spices such as saffron, nutmeg, and cinnamon. Norman influences are also found, such as in the fondness for meat dishes.”

Left photo: Farmer’s market [courtesy Jacek Dylag unsplash]

“The Jewish community, who lived on the island, also left their mark on Sicilian cuisine; they were responsible for introducing garlic fried in olive oil into the sauce. Later, the Spanish introduced numerous items from the New World,

including cocoa, maize, peppers, zucchini, potatoes, and tomatoes, along with other produce. Much of the island's cuisine encourages the use of fresh vegetables such as eggplant, artichoke, and tomatoes, and fish such as tuna, sea bream, sea bass, cuttlefish, and swordfish. In Trapani in the extreme western corner of the island, North African influences are clear in the use of couscous.”

Weather - Temperatures will range between 50-60 degrees Fahrenheit. It will be mostly sunny with some possibility of rain.

Safety - Sicily is among the [safest regions](#) in Italy. The principal concern is petty theft. Normal precautions about protecting one’s possessions from pickpockets in crowded spaces should be taken.



Siracusa [[courtesy Gualia](#)]

Trip Price

The AMC Member price is \$6,590. The non-member price is \$6,690. To join the AMC (2025 pricing \$50 individual, \$75 family) click [here](#).

Price includes:

- 14 nights of lodging in three or four star hotels
- All breakfasts, four lunches and ten dinners
- All transportation internal to the trip including private coach and ferries
- All guide services and admission fees
- Emergency medical and evacuation insurance coverage
- Tips for the local guides

Right photo: Sicilian delicacies [courtesy Jacek Dylag unsplash]



Price does not include:

- Airfare. The trip leaders will advise you as much as you need and will facilitate group travel. At this time, we estimate that the cost for a round trip ticket between the US east coast and Palermo, Sicily will be in the range of \$1,000-\$1,500.
- Meals not specified, beverages, and incidental expenses
- Local transport between arrival in Palermo and the initial hotel
- Insurance for travel delay, interruption, cancellation, or for baggage loss. If the possibility of such problems concerns you, individual travel insurance is suggested. The AMC has a recommended vendor whose material will be sent to you if your application is accepted.
- Tips for our hosts/trip organizers Anthony and Marina. These are at participant discretion.

Participant Expectations

In addition to those detailed in the 'Terms, Conditions and General Information' section linked below, you should enjoy traveling with a group for extended periods of time and be comfortable traveling in areas which are unfamiliar to you. You should recognize that you may find yourself in closer quarters or be less comfortable than you are used to at home. You should make it a priority to help others on the trip and contribute to their having a great time. If you do that, it will make your time exponentially more enjoyable! *Right photo: Group lunch stop during hike [courtesy Claudine Kos]*



Application Process

We expect a group size of 14 participants. This trip is likely to fill quickly. If you are interested, you should apply as soon as possible.

To apply, you need to download, complete, and submit the [online application](#).

You will not be accepted and your check will not be deposited until one of the leaders has determined by telephone conversation with you that you and the trip are a good match. Deposit checks from waitlisted applicants will not be cashed until a spot is available, the applicant is accepted onto the trip, and they confirm their continued interest.

Deposit of \$2,500 is due with application. A check payable to the Appalachian Mountain Club should be sent to: Dee Dice, 35 Pilgrim Dr., Northampton, MA 01060. A telephone conversation with one of the leaders will take place after your application **and** deposit check are received to determine if you are a good fit. The final balance of \$4,090 will be due October 1, 2025.

The price will be adjusted in accordance with the best final arrangements we can make and currency fluctuations. Any savings we achieve, as well as any cost increases, will be passed back to you. Our cost estimates are conservative, and so a refund is considerably more likely than a price increase.

Terms, Conditions, Cancellation Policy and General Information

Participants will be refunded 100% of their deposit if they cancel prior to leaders declaring the trip a GO. If participants cancel after the trip is declared a GO, refunds will be calculated and determined after the trip returns based on actual expenses incurred, unless an appropriate replacement from the wait-list is accepted.

Please carefully read the [Adventure Travel Standard Terms and Conditions](#)

Trip Leadership



Dee Dice is an Adventure Travel Leader who has led trips in Glacier National Park, Baja Mexico, Spain, Morocco and Iceland, including a two-week hiking trip to Austria. She has been leading hikes, weekend trips and paddling trips with the AMC Western Mass and Worcester Chapters since 2018. Her passion is hiking and kayaking which has brought her around the world, traveling extensively to Nepal, New Zealand, South America and Europe. deedice29@gmail.com 508-566-9565



Sue is a psychologist who has led Mindfulness- based retreats in wilderness settings. She is certified by the School of Outdoor Mindful Leadership at the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health. As an avid hiker and cyclist, she has traveled throughout Europe and the US. She led many friend groups on outdoor adventures in Midcoast Maine. She began leading weekend trips in New England with the Boston Chapter of the AMC in 2019 and is thrilled to be leading Adventure Travel Trips in the US and abroad. She has a grown son and lives with her husband Chuck on the North Shore of MA.