



ACADEMY
TRAVEL

TAILORED
SMALL GROUP
JOURNEYS

PALERMO & NAPLES

ART, HISTORY & CULTURE
IN ITALY'S SOUTHERN CAPITALS

Palermo Cathedral

OVERVIEW

Encounter Italy's exuberant southern capitals of Naples and Palermo, with their mix of ancient and modern cultures and artistic fusion of east and west.

Discover a captivating blend of Mediterranean history, art, architecture and culture on this 14-day residential-style tour with linguist and art history specialist Dr Jeni Ryde. Southern Italy has been fundamentally shaped by foreign powers, from ancient Greeks and Romans to medieval Arabs and Angevins, and of course the mighty Spanish. In Palermo and Naples, the result is exhilarating cultural capitals that preserve a different feel to the rest of Italy, but which only truly reveal their sophisticated nature with in-depth exploration.

Enjoy an opportunity to experience everyday life, after the bustle of the holiday season has subsided, from our comfortable and centrally-located hotels. In addition to a carefully thought-out program of walking tours, archaeological site visits, museums and galleries, there is time for independent exploration. An evening performance and excellent regional cuisine round out the experience.



TOUR LEADER

Dr Jeni Ryde is a linguist and art history specialist with over 15 years experience leading tours to Italy, Spain, France and Portugal. She is passionate about art, design and architecture.

TOUR DATES

January 7-20, 2025 | 14 Days

TOUR PRICE

\$12,980 per person, twin share
\$2,880 single supplement

TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$1,000** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

ITINERARY

Palermo (6 nights), Ferry (1 night),
Naples (6 nights)

INCLUSIONS

12 nights' accommodation in centrally located 4-star hotels, and **1** night aboard an overnight ferry from Palermo to Naples. All breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 dinners. Best available tickets to **1** performance. Services of an expert tour leader and an experienced tour manager throughout. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Start & Finish

The tour starts at 3.30pm on Tuesday 7 January, at Rome Fiumicino airport to board your flight to Palermo. The tour ends at 12.00pm on Monday 20 January, at Rome Fiumicino airport, following our coach transfer from Naples.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D.

Tuesday 7 January

Arrive Palermo

Meet at Rome Fiumicino airport to commence the tour. There is a group flight to Palermo airport, then transfer by coach to our hotel in Palermo. In the early evening we meet for welcome drinks and dinner in the hotel. Overnight Palermo (D)

Wednesday 8 January

Old Palermo

This morning we stroll through some of Palermo's most ancient districts, dating back to the Phoenician period, c.700 BCE. We begin with the mosaic-filled Martorana church from the Norman period and continue to the lively Ballaró market. The Kalsa district was Arab Sicily's administrative centre from 831 to the Norman conquest in 1072, and it is brimming with historic buildings. This afternoon, we visit the Stanze al Genio museum, a remarkable collection of majolica tiles from Sicily and Naples, spanning 500 years and housed in an elegant private apartment. Our welcome dinner is at the modern L'Ottava Nota restaurant, one of Palermo's best. Overnight Palermo (B, D)

Thursday 9 January

Sicily's Ancient Heritage | Performance

One of the most important sites of ancient Greek colonisation, the island of Sicily preserves some of the best Greek art and architecture to be found. Today we travel by coach to Segesta, the home of the ancient Elymian people, who built a beautiful temple in the Greek style. The theatre, oriented towards the sea, and the atmospheric ruins have inspired generations of travellers and artists. After a simple lunch at the site café, we return to Palermo via the belle époque beach resort of Mondello, and Monte Pellegrino, where we visit the cave-shrine of the local patron saint, Santa Rosalia. Our final stop is Palermo's excellent archaeological museum, not far from our hotel. This evening we attend a recital in a deconsecrated church just near our hotel – the Baroque-style San Mattia ai Crociferi. Overnight Palermo (B, L)

Performance details

Venue: Auditorium San Mattia at the Crociferi, Palermo
Performance: To be advised

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Sicily's Medieval Melting Pot

Marvel at the Sicilian Normans' power and prestige, from glittering mosaics in Monreale and Cefalù to Arabic-style hunting lodges and saint-princess Rosalia's cave sanctuary.

Behind The Leopard's Palace Doors

Enter the world of the Sicilian aristocracy and of *The Leopard*, on a private tour of writer Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's home with his adopted son.

Art & Architecture of Southern Italy

Discover the region's greatest art, from Antonello da Messina to Caravaggio's final Neapolitan masterpieces and the spectacular Capodimonte, one of Italy's finest art galleries.

A Baroque Treasure in the hinterland of Naples

Discover the outstanding Palace of Caserta, a triumph of the Italian Baroque, built in the mid 18th-century for Bourbon King Charles III and integrated beautifully into the park in which it is set.

National Archaeological Museum of Naples

Explore Italy's most important archaeological museum, housed in a fine Bourbon building in the heart of Naples. It contains a wealth of paintings, mosaics, sculptures and everyday objects from Pompeii, Herculaneum and the Bay of Naples.

Segesta



Palazzo Lanza Tomasi



Friday 10 January Meet the Normans

We begin our day with a survey of Palermo's Norman sites at La Zisa, the Norman's summer palace, completed during the reign of William II. It now holds a small but excellent museum of the Arab period. After a stop at the ruins of La Cuba, an elegant park-pavilion that was once part of a vast hunting estate, we head up the hills which ring Palermo to the town of Monreale. Here William II created an overwhelming visual metaphor for his power in Monreale's cathedral, with its kilos and kilos of gold mosaics telling the story of the king's divine right to rule. The cathedral's exquisite carved cloister is an unrivalled masterpiece of medieval art and architecture. Overnight Palermo (B)

Saturday 11 January Medieval & Renaissance Fine Art

While Monreale overwhelms us with its scale, Norman king Roger II's Palatine Chapel is remarkable for its exquisite detail and beauty. Located within the Norman Palace, still functioning as Sicily's regional parliament, its Byzantine mosaics glitter amongst ceiling paintings and stone carvings that reflect the Arabic style of its Muslim craftsmen. After a morning visit, we make our way to the nearby charming Norman church of San Giovanni degli Eremiti, built over a pre-existing mosque. We stroll back to our hotel via Palermo Cathedral, a remarkable structure built over a period of centuries and containing the monumental tombs of the Norman kings. This afternoon there is a special private visit to the last home of Prince Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, author of the celebrated novel *The Leopard* – a bittersweet elegy to Sicily's feudal past. After touring Palazzo Lanza Tomasi, which overlooks Palermo harbour, we meet with the writer's nephew and adopted son, Gioacchino Lanza Tomasi (reputedly the inspiration for *The Leopard's Tancredi*) and his wife Nicoletta, the current Duchess of Palma. Overnight Palermo (B)

Sunday 12 January After the Normans

Sicily's excellent regional art gallery is located within the 14th-century Palazzo Abatellis. The fine collection includes the magnificent *Triumph of Death* fresco, once adorning a private palace, and Antonello da Messina's *Virgin Annunciate*, one of the finest works of the Italian renaissance. After a morning tour of the Palazzo Abatellis, we visit the Palazzo Chiaramonte Steri, built by the family which ruled Sicily on behalf of the Aragonese. Today the palace is the seat of the regional university. It contains a fine magna aula, once the medieval banqueting hall, and the prisons of the Holy inquisition, with fascinating prisoner graffiti. Overnight Palermo (B)

Monday 13 January Cefalù – Ferry to Naples

This morning there is the option of visiting the fine 18th-century stucco interiors of the Santa Cita oratory and other nearby sites. We then check out of the hotel and head to Cefalù, about 60km east of Palermo. Here we visit the cathedral built by Norman king Roger II in 1132 to give thanks for a miraculous escape from shipwreck. The giant mosaic here of *Christ the*



Royal Palace of Caserta



Pantocrator, both judge and compassionate ruler, is one of Roger's most powerful commissions. After a visit to the Museo Mandralisca, a quirky museum that preserves an important portrait by Antonello da Messina, we return to Palermo. We farewell the city with drinks at the Grand Hotel Villa Igiea, an elegant art nouveau-style hotel overlooking the port. We depart Palermo by ferry this evening for an overnight voyage to Naples, with a light dinner onboard. Overnight Ferry to Naples (B, D)

Tuesday 14 January

Naples' Ancient Roots

Upon arrival to Naples, we have breakfast at our hotel with fine views over the Bay of Naples. We take a panoramic tour, then stroll through the old town of Naples, along the ancient and atmospheric 'spaccanapoli' thoroughfare. We call in at Napoli Sotteranea – a Roman market excavated under the foundations of the medieval church of San Lorenzo. Finally, we take a leisurely walk back to the hotel via the Via Toledo, now the main pedestrian thoroughfare of the old town. Overnight Naples (B)

Wednesday 15 January

Roman Heritage

This morning we head to the ruins of Herculaneum, a Roman seaside town on the Bay of Naples, which, like the better-known Pompeii, was destroyed in a volcanic eruption in 79 CE. Our local guide takes us on a tour of the well-preserved houses, shops and public buildings, many of them with their wall-paintings intact. The afternoon is spent at Naples' National Archaeological Museum, a treasure trove of staggering mosaics, statuary and everyday household objects dug up at various ancient sites. The museum was built in the 18th century during the first period of the Bourbon kings. It is as much propaganda for their claims to enlightened reign as it is a commemoration of ancient Rome. Overnight Naples (B)

Thursday 16 January

Medieval Naples

Today is spent exploring parts of Naples well off the beaten path for most tourists. We visit the church of San Giovanni a Carbonara, with its many precious sculptures, completed in the early 15th century under King Ladislaus of Durazzo, who turned the church into a Pantheon-like tribute to the last of the Angevin rulers of Naples. After a lunch break in the elegant hilltop district of Vomero, we explore San Martino, a spectacularly sited Carthusian monastery from the Renaissance period, now a museum. We stroll around the grandiose complex, with its eccentric collection of objects – from Bourbon carriages to a fine collection of presepi, traditional Nativity scenes. We take the funicular back down to the centre, where we visit San Domenico Maggiore, the intellectual heart of the Angevin Renaissance. Overnight Naples (B)

Friday 17 January

Ancient & Medieval Heritage in the Countryside

Our excursion today showcases some of the cultural jewels just north of Naples. Our first stop is the impressive Roman amphitheatre at Santa Maria Capua Vetere, along the route of the ancient Appian Way. Capua is renowned as the place where the slave Spartacus trained to become one of Rome's greatest

HOTELS

Both hotels have been selected for their central location and their four-star rating.

Palermo, Hotel Porta Felice (6 nights)

A 33-room boutique hotel built into an old Sicilian palace on the outskirts of the historic city centre of Palermo.

hotelportafelice.it

Palermo to Naples, Overnight Ferry (1 night)

Cabins on the ferry have private bathrooms and are basic, but comfortable. The journey takes 12 hours.

Naples, Grand Hotel Saint Lucia (6 nights)

An impressive Art-Nouveau property right on the harbour in the heart of historic Naples.

santalucia.it

WEATHER

January is a great time for cultural travel to Southern Italy. There are less tourists around, with fewer queues for major monuments. Temperatures are cool in the morning (around 3-6 degrees), usually warming up to 12-18 degrees in the day. It is reasonable to expect some rain and possible colder weather across parts of the tour.

FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

Grade Two

This tour is designed for people who lead active lives. You should be able to comfortably participate in up to five hours of physical activity per day, including walking at an easy to regular pace, sometimes on uneven terrain, with only short breaks. For all requirements, please visit our website.

gladiators and later led a revolt, for which he paid with his life. We then head to the medieval hilltop village of Casertavecchia. Little has changed here since the 18th century, when its citizens were forcibly moved to the vast Bourbon Royal Palace of Caserta – our final destination on today's excursion. Constructed for the Bourbon Kings of Naples, the the palace has five floors with an astonishing 1,200 rooms and is set amongst one of the last great gardens of Europe, featuring manicured terraces, fountains, cascades and natural woodlands. We conclude our trip with lunch in a fine countryside restaurant before returning to Naples. Overnight Naples (B, L)

Saturday 18 January **Painting in Naples, 1200-1700**

This morning is spent at Capodimonte, located in the vast former hunting lodge of the Bourbon King Charles VII. Capodimonte now houses Naples' most important fine arts museum, with masterpieces by Tuscans Simone Martini, Masaccio and Botticelli. The strongly Hispano-Flemish taste of the Spanish viceroys is also reflected in works by Caravaggio, De Ribera (known in Naples as the "Spagnoletto") and El Greco. There is ample time to wander in the extensive park – with a beautiful view over Naples – visit the royal apartments, or spend more time in the magnificent art collection. Overnight Naples (B)

Sunday 19 January **In Spaccanopoli with Caravaggio**

We continue our examination of Naples' fine art culture with a day dedicated to Caravaggio and his milieu. The "bad boy" of the High Renaissance fled here after legal run-ins in Rome and Genoa. We begin at Naples' fine cathedral observing Sunday Mass and visiting its baptistry. At the Pio Monte della Misericordia, we admire Caravaggio's *The Seven Works of Mercy*, one of his most complex and powerful works. In the late morning we visit the Cappella Sansevero, which preserves Giuseppe Sanmartino's awe-inspiring *Veiled Christ*, a tour-de-force of the tactile possibilities of hard marble. Strolling back to the hotel, we visit the fine 18th-century majolica cloisters at the monastery Santa Chiara. Returning to the hotel, you might like to call in at the Gallerie d'Italia, housing the Neapolitan collection of one of Italy's biggest banks. Our farewell dinner is at an excellent local restaurant. Overnight Naples (B, D)

Monday 20 January **Departure**

After breakfast, there is a morning coach transfer to Fiumicino airport for those on flights departing after 3.00pm. (B)



ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Sharon Williams** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email:

sharon@academytravel.com.au