

Bicycle Tours in Italy: Bicycle the Baroque Towns of Southeastern Sicily

OVERVIEW

This bicycle tour of southeast Sicily explores the heart of ancient Magna Grecia. Beginning in Siracusa or Syracuse in English, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with over 3,000 years of Mediterranean history you'll discover the interior towns in the Valle di Noto. Most of which were destroyed in a massive earthquake that killed 60,000 people in 1693. Under Spanish dominion at the time architects called on two centuries of Urban planning experience and rebuilt eight towns here in the late Baroque style. You'll visit four of them, Ragusa, Scicli, Modica and Valle di Noto. All four are listed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites and each one is spectacularly beautiful.

Continue your exploration of Sicily and join us to for the [Grand Cycling Tour of Sicily](#) which includes [Cycle Southwestern Sicily's Ancient Mediterranean Cities](#) and we'll include a shuttle to Agrigento where the tour begins.

HIGHLIGHTS

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the valle di Noto, Syracuse, Rural countryside accommodations with pools, Olive oil tasting, Beaches and swimming opportunities, Archaeological site of Cava d'Ispica.

TOUR FACTS

Tour Style	■ Classic: Learn more about our Classic tours at https://www.experienceplus.com/choosing-the-best-tour/styles/classic
Includes	8 days, 7 nights accommodation; meals as noted in itinerary; 1 wine tasting; olive press visit and tasting
Countries	Italy
Begin/End	Siracusa (Syracuse in English) / Scicli
Arrive/Depart	Catania Airport (CTA)
Total Distance	360 km (222 miles)
Avg. Daily Distance	56 km (35 miles) per riding day
Tour Level	▶▶▶▶
Keep in Mind	<p>We work hard to maintain consistency across all of our tours, but some trips have unique differences. Here are some things to keep in mind about this tour.</p> <p>We recommend not drinking the tap water in Sicily. While tap water in Europe is generally safe to drink, Sicily is different. We will provide bottled water on tour. If you arrive early, we recommend you drink bottled water also.</p> <p>We will have a free night in Ragusa on Day 5, where you can choose to dine at Michelin restaurants if you wish. If you'd like to enjoy an evening at either Locanda don Serafino (1 Michelin star) or Ciccio Sultano Duomo (2 Michelin stars), we recommend you make reservations online in advance.</p>

Please Note: We may have small itinerary changes to this trip after you download this PDF document. If you have booked this trip and there are major changes, including changes to towns or activities, we'll email you directly. However, you should always be sure to refer to the ■ [online itinerary](#) for the most up-to-date trip information including arrival and departure tips before you depart for your trip:

<https://www.experienceplus.com/bike-tours/italy/sicily/bike-tour-of-sicilys-baroque-towns>

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DATES & PRICES

Dates	Price	Single Supplement*
May 04, 2024	USD\$4495	USD\$550
Sep 14, 2024	USD\$4495	USD\$550
Sep 28, 2024	USD\$4495	USD\$550

DAILY RIDE SUMMARY

Day	Distance/Gain	Terrain	Day Level	Notes
1	Test ride			
2	55km / 396m (34mi / 1299ft)	Gentle	▶▶▶▶▶	
3	61km / 457m (38mi / 1499ft)	Gentle	▶▶▶▶▶	
4	45km / 827m (28mi / 2713ft)	Very hilly	▶▶▶▶▶	
5	60km / 1002m (38mi / 3287ft)	Hilly	▶▶▶▶▶	
6	72km / 746m (45mi / 2447ft)	Rolling hills	▶▶▶▶▶	
7	60km / 932m (38mi / 3057ft)	Hilly	▶▶▶▶▶	Today's ride is an optional loop ride
8	Last Day			



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ARRIVAL INFO

Meeting time 2 p.m. - on Day 1, meet your fellow cyclists and Tour Leaders at the Day 1 Hotel specified on the itinerary.

Note: As you are planning, remember that the hotels listed in our itineraries are our primary hotels and are - in rare cases - subject to change. Before you make arrangements, [check with us](#) if your tour departure is guaranteed. If your tour departure is out further than 6 months, please also check with us as there might be slight changes to the itinerary.

The below information will help you plan your arrival. For more tips or other routes, you might like [Rome2Rio](#). The fare and timing information listed below is approximate.

Airport: We recommend flying into the Catania Airport (CTA).

Getting from the Catania airport to the Day 1 hotel:

1. Interbus from Catania Airport to "Siracusa Corso Umberto 196 Terminal Bus" (the last stop) (1 hour 15 min/EUR 6.20)
2. Taxi from the bus stop to the Day 1 hotel. If there is no taxi at the bus stop, [walk 2 min](#) to the central station square where you will find plenty of taxis (10 min/EUR 12-15)

Or

- Hotel transfer from the Catania Airport to the Day 1 hotel (1 hour/fare varies by number of passengers and time of day)

Note: Sicily is not an entirely train-friendly region and on some routes train travel can take several hours with various changes. We recommend using the efficient bus network instead.

DEPARTURE INFO

The tour ends on the final day after breakfast.

The below information will help you plan your departure. For more tips or other routes, you might like [Rome2Rio](#).

Airport: We recommend flying out of the Catania (CTA) Airport.

Getting from the tour end to the Catania airport:

- Bus from [Largo Antonio Gramsci bus stop](#) to the Catania Airport (2 hours 55 min/EUR 10-15)

Or

- Hotel transfer from the ending hotel to the Catania airport (1.5 hours/EUR 140 per car, up to 4 people).

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Meet in Siracusa (Syracuse)

Highlights Ancient Siracusa, one of the oldest Greek settlements in Magna Grecia

Arrive today in Siracusa or "Syracuse" in English. The Greek "Syrakousai" was one of the first Greek colonies in the western Mediterranean, founded in 734 BC by colonists from Corinth. By the mid-5th century BC it rivaled Athens for supremacy with a population of a quarter of a million people. Home to Archimedes (of Archimedes Principle fame) Siracusa has a wealth of ancient Greek ruins and the largest Greek theater from the 5th Century BC. Our hotel is in the center of ancient Ortigia. Enjoy a test ride around the ramparts before our special welcome dinner tonight. The September 14 and 28, 2024 departures are staying at Palazzo Salomone.

DAY 1

Meals Dinner

Lodging ■ Henry's House
■ Palazzo Salomone

Siracusa to Noto

Highlights UNESCO town of Noto, country resort near the world famous Vendicari nature reserve

Your first ride in Sicily has you pedaling through small beach and fishing towns, passing an abandoned "tonara" or tuna canning factory which was one of the biggest economic drivers of the island in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The route takes us inland to the imposing town of Noto, one of the many towns in this region rebuilt (in a new location) in the grand baroque style after the earthquake of 1693. The striking white town is perched above the valley and makes for an impressive destination as you pedal towards it. Enjoy a walk in Noto before heading to our destination tonight, a splendid old farmhouse renovated into lodging with a swimming pool and particularly lovely grounds.

DAY 2

Distance 55 km (34 mi)

Gain 396 m (1299 ft)

Terrain Gentle

Level ▶▶▶▶▶

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Lodging ■ Hotel Corte del Sole

Noto Loop to Marzamemi and Capo Passero

Highlights Fishing port of Marzamemi, coastal scenery and beaches, wine tasting

Take your swimming suit along today as there are plenty of opportunities to find an isolated beach to take a refreshing dip. You'll pass through the fishing village of Marzamemi, a village built up around the ancient tonara. The red tuna from this area are still prized in Japan for sushi. While the tonara here is no longer working, the quaint fishing village has maintained its charm with quaint buildings, restaurants, cafés and stores. From here you can opt to continue your ride along a quiet coastal road to Capo Passero, which is the furthest southeastern point in Sicily. This evening we'll enjoy a wine tasting before dinner together.

DAY 3

Distance 61 km (38 mi)

Gain 457 m (1499 ft)

Terrain Gentle

Level ▶▶▶▶▶

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Lodging ■ Hotel Corte del Sole



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Spectacular climb to the high plains of the interior

Highlights Cavagrande del Cassibile, lunch together with pool and sea view, lovely farm hotel amid almond and olive groves

Your ride today takes you to the interior of the island through olive and almond groves. An impressive climb of approximately 400 meters (1,300 feet) up a narrow canyon that delivers stunning views into the deep canyon and far out to the sea as you summit on the plateau. Reward yourself with a pool side lunch (and perhaps a dip in the pool!) before continuing along the plateau to reach our quiet country lodge immersed in the hills and close to the expansive ruins of the old city of Noto destroyed in the earthquake of 1693. A brief stroll through Noto Antica's ruins allows you to travel back in time and imagine the large city that once dominated the area. All that remains today is scattered stones, crumbling buildings and tower ruins.

Ride from Noto Antica to Ragusa

Highlights Country roads, the new and old cities of Ragusa

You are primarily on country roads today as you pedal west to Ragusa. Stop and visit an olive oil press to learn about the local olives, the local farmers, and the business of making olive oil. From there you'll continue to Ragusa which, like Noto, was rebuilt in the 17th century after the massive earthquake. Uniquely though, Ragusa was not moved to a new site. The result is a new baroque town on a ridge top next to the ancient town clinging to a narrow ridge and the valley below.

Bicycle from Ragusa to Scicli

Highlights Lands once occupied by Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans and Italians; water mill; archaeological site of Cava d'Ispica; picnic

The timeless landscape of southeast Sicily comes to life today as you pedal ridges and hills toward the famous archaeological sites of Cava d'Ispica, a narrow gorge filled with grottoes which were used since Neolithic times for lodging. Enjoy a picnic lunch near a unique water mill built in a cave before continuing on to the delightful town of Scicli. Scicli is the set for the TV film series Inspector Montalbano, based on the fictional town of Vigáta. Tourism to the area has boomed thanks to this popular TV series although a walk through town will highlight much more than a mere TV set! *The May 4 departure will stay at Palazzo Conti.

DAY 4

Distance 45 km (28 mi)
Gain 827 m (2713 ft)
Terrain Very hilly
Level 
Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging  Kallikoros

DAY 5

Distance 60 km (38 mi)
Gain 1002 m (3287 ft)
Terrain Hilly
Level 
Meals Breakfast
Lodging  Hotel San Giorgio

DAY 6

Distance 72 km (45 mi)
Gain 746 m (2447 ft)
Terrain Rolling hills
Level 
Meals Breakfast
Lodging  Hotel Novecento
 Scicli Albergo Diffuso
 Palazzo Conti



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Loop Rides from Scicli to Modica and/or Donnalucata

Highlights Famous chocolate town of Modica and to the seaside town of Donnalucata

We'll mark two loop rides today to nearby Modica and to the seaside at Donnalucata. Donnalucata is the site of a decisive battle in 1091 between the Normans and the moors. It was also central to the allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943. It also offers a chance for a little beach time for those so inclined. Modica is another town rebuilt after the earthquake of 1693 but, as it sits astride the Modica River, it also suffered from devastating floods at the beginning of the 19th century. Modica is also famous for retaining the original Aztec recipe for chocolate imported by the Spaniards in the 16th century. We'll enjoy a special visit and tasting at the Bonajuto chocolate shop which touts six generations of artisan confectioners. *The May 4 departure will stay at Palazzo Conti.

DAY 7

Distance 60 km (38 mi)

Gain 932 m (3057 ft)

Terrain Hilly

Level 

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Lodging  Hotel Novecento
 Scicli Albergo Diffuso
 Palazzo Conti

Your tour ends in Scicli after breakfast

Highlights Continue your exploration of Sicily

Your tour ends today unless you decide to continue your exploration of Sicily and join us to Cycle Southwestern Sicily's Ancient Mediterranean Cities.

DAY 8

Meals Breakfast



INCLUDED**WHAT'S INCLUDED**

When you book a tour with ExperiencePlus! our goal is to ensure your only focus each day is to hop on your bike and explore scenic cycling routes in new destinations. Inclusions may differ depending on which tour style you pick but all ExperiencePlus! tours include what we believe are the most important aspects of a bike tour.

- On all our guided tours, you can expect superb tour leaders who are fun and multilingual, bi-cultural experts, and cycling enthusiasts. They will support you and help you navigate confidently on and off the road.
- High quality bikes selected for the terrain you are cycling on and correct bike fitting to ensure comfortable cycling.
- Thoughtfully designed itineraries and routes that take advantage of stunning cycling destinations and the freedom of bicycle travel. Plus, all the logistics are taken care of.

PRE-TRIP SUPPORT

- Bicycle training programs designed specifically for your tour and fitness level.
- Planning tips on what to pack, hotel recommendations and other helpful details from our Travel Planning Pages: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/>
- A gift of your choice (cycling jerseys, socks, or a t-shirt) as our way of saying thanks for choosing EP!
- *Traveler services including assistance booking extra nights at the tour starting and ending hotels. (*Explorer and Self-guided tour styles excluded)
- See "What's Included" for tour-specific inclusions and be sure to check the "Keep in mind" section under "Tour Summary" online.

BICYCLES

For a full list of what's included with your bike see: <https://www.experienceplus.com/what-to-expect/our-bikes/>. If you would like to bring your own pedals and shoes we recommend doing so. On Explorer and Self-guided tours we include a GPS device on all bikes.

NAVIGATING, DAYSHEETS AND VAN SUPPORT:

On a guided tour, each day you'll receive a daily briefing with a highlighted route map. On a self-guided tour you'll receive a comprehensive orientation and bike fit on the first or second morning of your trip. About 14 days prior to your tour, we will provide you with access to

RideWithGPS Experiences, our platform to distribute information on each tour day's activities, meals and ride, as well as GPS-routes.

Daily information on the RWGPS Experience includes important phone numbers, hotel information and interesting historical and cultural information. On Classic, Bike and Boat and Expedition tours we also navigate using our signature chalk dust arrows. Our arrows make navigating very easy—you may never need to look at the map. On Explorer tours the terrain and destinations are not always conducive to using chalk arrows so we'll ride as a group or you can navigate on your own with the GPS tracks.

On a guided tour you will have a support van providing water and snack resupply, mechanical assistance, a lift for tired cyclists, and luggage transfers. On some itineraries the van will not be able to follow sections of the route that stray from the road for example onto cycling paths. On a self-guided tour you will have luggage transfers that will transport your bags from one hotel to the other.

Need More Miles? On many days it is possible to add miles to the day, just talk to your tour leader about your options or ask when you are planning your self-guided trip.

Need Fewer Miles? On a guided tour, the support van is available to offer snacks, encouragement, a lift over the next hill, or to the next hotel. On a self-guided tour we recommend you review the tour level to make sure you can ride the full distance.

ON A GUIDED TOUR: TIPPING YOUR TOUR LEADERS

If you feel your tour leader team has demonstrated great expertise and service, common practice within the travel industry is to tip. Tipping is voluntary and greatly appreciated, and gratuity amounts vary widely. Should you decide to leave a tip, as a guideline, we suggest 5-8% of the tour cost per traveler — this is for the entire tour leader team, not each tour leader. You can give the tip to any member of the tour leader team, as they share it evenly. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you feel your tour leaders did not quite meet your expectations, please let us know.

*Tips are included in Expedition pricing and not expected on self-guided tours.

PHOTOS:

By reserving space on tour, you agree that ExperiencePlus! may use, re-use and reproduce any images, photos or videos sent to us, or that are taken by our guides or other travelers, in any medium, including but not limited to print, electronic media, or Internet, free of charge and without your right to inspection. If you do not want us to use any images of you, you must inform us or your tour leader in writing at the start of the tour.

STYLES **OUR TOUR STYLES**

We realize that one size does not fit all and there are as many ways to travel by bike as there are different types of cyclists and travelers.

Classic Tours: Dream of traveling through a region by bike? Our unique chalk arrows lead the way as you explore small villages and world-class cities while traveling at your own pace.

- Tour Length: 7-15 days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars.
- Road Type: Pavement, bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: 2-3 tour leaders, van support and chalk arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4.5

Explorer Tours: Travel further off the beaten path - we let the destination dictate where we ride, not the road surface.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days
- Hotels: 2-3 stars
- Road Type: 30-50% gravel or hard-packed dirt, the rest pavement.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: 2 tour leaders, GPS and van support
- Price: \$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Bike and Boat Tours: Spend days cycling and your evenings relaxing on a private boat as you cruise to your next port.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days, some itineraries have land-based extensions available.
- Barge/Boat: 3-4 star, same cabin for the entire boat trip except for land extension.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Navigation and support: 2 tour leaders, van Support and chalk arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Expedition Tours: Multi-week tours where you spend long days on the bike with the added satisfaction of pedaling across multiple countries.

- Tour Length: 15-40 days
- Hotels: 2-4 stars
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel.
- Multi-night Stays: On rest days
- Navigation and support: 2-3 tour leaders, van Support and chalk arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 4-5

Self-guided Tours: perfect for those who have an independent spirit, want the flexibility to choose their own dates, and don't need van support or tour leaders during their trip. Every departure is a private tour!

- Tour Length: 6-8-days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel on bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: GPS routes and luggage transfers
- Price: \$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

**LEVELS**

We know that travelers have different cycling abilities and preferences for the number of miles, elevation gain, and type of terrain they want on a bicycle tour. We have rated each day of our tours on a scale of 1-5. Our Tour Level's are an average of the day rating on tour. We recommend looking at the daily summary on the PDF and Website Itinerary to see details about each day's ride.

LEVEL 1 - 1.5

Level 1 - 1.5 days will be mostly flat and the distance will rarely exceed 50 km. Level 1 - 1.5 tours are suitable for beginner cyclists, those traveling by bicycle for the first time, or multi-generational groups with a desire for a nice and easy bike tour with plenty of opportunities to stop and enjoy the scenery.

- **Average daily mileage:** 20 - 50 km. (12-30 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 0-400 M (0-1200 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly flat with occasional gentle climbs at a grade of less than 3%, that are sustained for a maximum of 3km. There might be a steeper but short climb.

LEVEL 2 - 2.5

Level 2 - 2.5 days are ideal for riders newer to bicycle touring looking for a bit of a challenge.

- **Average daily mileage:** 30-60 km (18 - 38 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 400 - 600 m (1200 - 2000 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly rolling terrain around 3%. Presents multiple 3% to 4% climbs. May present an occasional steeper climb.

LEVEL 3 - 3.5

Level 3 - 3.5 days are great for active individuals (who run, bike, swim etc. on a regular basis).

- **Average daily mileage:** 50-70km (30-45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 600 - 900m (2000 - 2800 ft)
- **Terrain:** Multiple Climbs with grades of 4 - 6%.

LEVEL 4 - 4.5

Level 4 - 4.5 days are the best riding days for avid cyclists or very active individuals who are excited to challenge themselves on a bike.

- **Average daily mileage:** 70-90km (45-55 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 900-1000m (2800-3600 ft)
- **Terrain:** Presents multiple steep climbs (6% to 8% grades), 1 to 3km long. Alternatively, 4 — 6% grades for 6 kilometers or more.

LEVEL 5 (EXPEDITION)

Our Expedition tours designed for strong riders looking for the challenge of riding across countries or continents. Long daily mileages mean limited van support so we recommend these tours for riders who feel confident that they can ride every mile.

- **Average daily mileage:** 120 km (75 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 500-2000 m (1600- 6500 ft)
- **Terrain:** Expect and be prepared for any and everything.

REMEMBER

A tour level is the average of the days so we recommend you look at the day level on each day of the itinerary to help you better understand what to expect from your tour.

CHECKLIST

TO DO ONCE YOU'VE BOOKED!

- Read through your Reservation Confirmation and After you Book Information (link sent to you by e-mail), it has important information to help you plan your trip!
- Check the date on your passport. The expiration date should extend three months past your date of return to your home country.
- Complete the Customer Information Form: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/customer-information-form/>
- We recommend you take out travel insurance. Find details at <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/travel-insurance/>
- Choose a bicycle training program: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/bicycle-tour-training/>
- Peruse our country-specific Travel Planning Pages: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/>

6 TO 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- Refer to your Tour Packet/Itinerary to see step-by-step arrival and departure information for your tour, meeting place and time, if a reservation on a complimentary ExperiencePlus! Shuttle (if applicable) is required, along with other important information to help you plan your arrival and departure.
- Reserve your flights after you know you have a confirmed tour departure. Please check with our office if you do not know if your trip is confirmed.
- Book your pre and post-tour hotel nights.
- Begin your chosen training program
- Final payment is due 90 days (120 days for Bike & Barge/Boat tours) prior to the tour start. Please refer to your Invoice and the Final Payment Reminder e-mail which we send 10 days prior to the due date for detailed instructions.

6 TO 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- Start reading one of the books or watching one of the movies from our Reading and Movie Lists: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/>.
- Plan what you are going to pack and start packing! Refer to the Packing Lists for suggestions, and see luggage limits at <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/packing/>.
- We'll email you your access code to Digital Daysheets, Hotel Itinerary, Participant Roster, names and contact information of your Tour Leaders, emergency phone numbers, and other important departure information about 2 weeks prior to your tour start date. All this will be provided to you via a feature called Experiences via the RideWithGPS App (tracks available but not necessary for navigation on Classic, Expedition and Bike & Boat tours).

DAY OF YOUR FLIGHT

Get as much sleep on the plane as you can. Pack one day of cycling gear in your carry-on just in case. See you soon!