"PALERMO AND THE BEST OF SICILY"

13 days, Tuesday, November 24, to Sunday, December 6, 2020

A leisurely and ‘upscale’ exploration of the biggest and most beautiful island in the Mediterranean, a part of Italy, of course, but in many ways a different planet! Based in a deluxe hotel in the wonderful capital, Palermo, we will enjoy many local treasures, including superb Byzantine churches and mosaics, and also explore the major attractions of the island’s western part, including the Greek temples of Segesta, Selinunte, and Agrigento; the seaports of Trapani and Marsala, and picturesque towns such as Erice and Cefalu. Afterwards we head east via the Canadian War Cemetery at Agira to explore the island’s second city, Catania, and nearby Mount Etna, Europe’s biggest volcano! The tour will feature fine food and wine and be hosted by historian Jacques R. Pauwels, PhD, author of ‘Beneath the Dust of Time: A History of the Names of Peoples and Places’ (London, 2009), who will lecture about the history of the island from the time of the prehistoric Siculi people, who gave their name to the island, to Sicily’s liberation at the end of WW II by Allied, including Canadian, forces.

Tour cost from Toronto, based on double occupancy: $3,950 - “Land only” (i.e. from Catania Airport upon arrival of the group flight on November 25 to Catania Airport on December 6): $3,010
Supplement for “double room for single use”: $550

ITINERARY:

Day 1 - Tuesday, November 24: Evening departure from Toronto to Frankfurt with Lufthansa. Dinner and a light breakfast will be served on board.

Day 2 - Wednesday, November 25: Morning arrival in Frankfurt, and connecting flight to Catania, Sicily. Arrival and transfer by private coach to Palermo, with en en route visit to Agira Canadian War Cemetery, an opportunity for your tour guide to tell you about the Canadian army’s role in the liberation of the island in 1943.
Arrival in **Palermo** and check into the centrally-located five-star/deluxe Grand Hotel Wagner ([https://www.grandhotelwagner.it/en](https://www.grandhotelwagner.it/en)). Free time to settle in. Welcome dinner in the hotel or in a nearby restaurant.

**Day 3 - Thursday, November 26:** Full-day sightseeing tour of Palermo, with highlights such as the Palace of the Norman kings of Medieval Sicily and the adjoining Palatine Chapel, whose interior is entirely covered in mosaics; the superb Cathedral and its tombs of Sicilian Kings, including Norman king Roger II and Frederick II, who was also German emperor; the wonderful Byzantine and/or Norman churches of San Cattaldo and La Martorana; the impressive Baroque sculptures of the Quattro Canti; Piazza Pretoria, etc.

*The fabulous mosaics in Monreale >*

**Day 4 - Friday, November 27:** Morning sidetrip to **Monreale**, a picturesque hilltop town overlooking the fertile valley known as Conca d’Oro or “golden shell,” as well as Palermo and the Mediterranean Sea. Visits to the fabulous Cathedral with its outstanding mosaics, a splendid example of “Sicilian-Norman” art, and the adjoining cloisters, inspired by Islamic architecture and featuring wonderful Romanesque pillars and capitals. On to the seaside resort of **Mondello**, situated on a beautiful inlet of the Tyrrhenian Sea, where we break for lunch. In the afternoon, return to Palermo via the **Monte Pellegrino** mountain road, offering spectacular views of the coast, with a stop briefly to inspect the immensely popular shrine of St. Rosalia, patron saint of the city. Today, lunch or dinner in a typical ristorante.

**UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES SCHEDULED TO BE VISITED ON THIS TOUR:**
Palermo with its Arab-Norman architecture – Church and Byzantine mosaics of Monreale – Church and Byzantine mosaics of Cefalu – Agrigento with its Greek temples – Villa del Casale and its Roman mosaics – Mount Etna. For more information, see: [https://www.charmingsicily.com/en/unesco-world-heritage-sites-sicily](https://www.charmingsicily.com/en/unesco-world-heritage-sites-sicily)

**Day 5 - Saturday, November 28:** This morning we check out Palermo’s famous Vucciria market ([https://wearepalermo.com/news/palermos-famous-marketplace-vucciria-day-night](https://wearepalermo.com/news/palermos-famous-marketplace-vucciria-day-night)), then explore the surrounding old harbour district, the city’s historical cradle, dating back to the time of the Phoenicians, with sights such as Piazza Marina, Garibaldi Gardens, the monumental city gate knows as Porta Felice, and churches such as Santa Maria della Catena and San Domenico. The rest of the day is free to shop and/or explore the city on your own. Free evening, and perhaps it will be possible to enjoy a classical music concert, ballet or opera in the magnificent Teatro Massimo, the equally imposing Teatro Politeama, or another venue.

**Day 6 - Sunday, November 29:** After a leisurely late breakfast, visit to the National Archaeological Museum, famous for its rare Phoenician and outstanding Greco-Roman antiquities ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regional_Archeological_Museum_Antonio_Salinas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regional_Archeological_Museum_Antonio_Salinas)). The rest of the day is free. You may want to visit another local museum or art gallery, perhaps the Regional Art Gallery of Sicily, housed within the Palazzo Abatellis, a 15th-century Gothic palace ([http://www.bestofsicily.com/mag/art172.htm](http://www.bestofsicily.com/mag/art172.htm)) or enjoy a stroll through the Botanical Gardens. Another option - but not for the faint-hearted! - is to accompany your guide to the Capuchin Catacombs, where approximately 8,000 mummified corpses are on display, described as “the place where the living meet the dead”! ([http://www.palermocatacombs.com](http://www.palermocatacombs.com))
Day 7 - Monday, November 30: Excursion along Sicily’s northern coast to the very picturesque town of Cefalu, tucked between a huge rock and the blue Mediterranean, nicknamed the “Sicilian Gibraltar.” The highlight of our visit will be the fabulous cathedral and its mosaics, featuring a superb ‘Christ Pantocrator.’ On the way back to Palermo, we will stop to inspect the ruins of the Greek temple of Himera, site of a famous victory of the Greeks against the Carthaginians in 480 BC. This evening, dinner in a popular trattoria near our hotel.

Day 8 - Tuesday, December 1: Today we explore the extreme western region of Sicily, a fascinating landscape of windmills, salt pans, vineyards, and fascinating old towns, some founded by the Phoenicians about 3,000 years ago! We begin with a tour of the old town, harbour, and picturesque fish market of Trapani. Travel along a coastline sprinkled with salt flats and windmills to the seaport of Marsala. Here we visit historical Cape Lilibeo as well as an excellent museum, featuring the “Marsala Ship!” the earliest warship known from archeological evidence, a Carthaginian warship discovered in 1971 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsala_Ship). Marsala produces a sweet wine, made famous by English merchants in the 19th century, so we dutifully drop into a local cantina to taste this delicious product! In the afternoon, visit to Erice, a small medieval town situated atop a cliff rising abruptly 750 meters above sea level. We enjoy breathtaking views, possibly as far as the coast of |North Africa, from the ruins of the castle, built on the foundations of a temple dedicated to Astarte, the Phoenician Aphrodite, allegedly associated with ‘sacred prostitution’. Erice is the perfect place to enjoy a mid-afternoon gelato or cappuccino break and to try some pastries in the famous shop of Maria Grammatico. Return to our hotel in the early evening.

< View of Trapani and the Aegadian Islands from the hilltop town of Erice

Day 9 - Wednesday, December 2: After breakfast, we board our coach and motor to Segesta, where a superb lone Greek temple dominates a grandiose landscape of rugged mountains, a peaceful valley, and the Mediterranean in the distance. On to the southern coast of the island for visits to the fascinating ancient quarries at Cusa and the impressive ruins of the temples on the site of the Greek city of Selinunte. Opportunity to enjoy a seafood lunch in a restaurant on the beach. Return to Palermo in late afternoon.

Day 8 - Thursday, December 10: Our last full day in Palermo is entirely at leisure. An optional full-day excursion will be available to the Aegadian Islands (Italian: Isole Egadi), a mini-archipelago of three islands rising from crystal-clear blue waters off the western tip of Sicily. The Romans defeated the Carthaginians in a naval battle fought here in 241BC, as a result of which Sicily became a Roman possession (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aegadian_Islands). Our visit will focus on the island of Favignana, epicenter of the historic tuna fisheries, known as the mattanza or “slaughter.”

< Women athletes on a mosaic in Villa del Casale (Wikimedia Vommons)

Day 11 - Friday, December 4: Departure from Palermo after breakfast. We motor to Agrigento, a town on the south coast of Sicily, for a guided tour of the spectacular
collection of very well-preserved Greek temples and the excellent local archaeological museum. In the afternoon we continue to Villa del Casale to admire the superb mosaics in a 4th-century AD Roman villa, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. On to Sicily’s second city, Catania, a bustling seaport situated on Sicily’s eastern coast at the foot of 3,330-meter high Mount Etna, the island’s huge volcano. Accommodation in the first-class Hotel Parco degli Aragonesi, situated in a garden near the shores of the Ionian Sea. Dinner in the hotel’s restaurant (http://nh-catania-parco-degli-aragonesi.catania.hotels-sicily.net/en).

**Mt. Etna with Catania in the foreground**

Day 12- Saturday, December 5: After breakfast we visit Catania’s famous fish market, the Cathedral with the tomb of a famous naïve son, the composer Bellini, and the famous main street, the Via Etnea, as well as the ruins of Roman monuments that survived the major historical eruptions of Mount Etna. Then we tour the slopes of Mount Etna, Europe’s highest volcano, classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1427). This excursion features desolate lunar landscapes of molten lava sprinkled with ruins of homes abandoned during recent eruptions, but also prosperous villages whose inhabitants rely on the rich volcanic soil to produce wonderful products such as wine, honey, cheese, and fruit. We will pause at the Sapienza Research Station, situated at an altitude of almost 2,000 meters, to inspect the Monti Silvestri, cones formed by eruptions during the 1980s. Group lunch of delicious Sicilian specialties in a winery on the slopes of Mt Etna, with great views (weather permitting) of the coast and the Ionian Sea below! Time permitting, there will be an opportunity for some shopping in Catania before we return to the hotel for a free evening.

Day 13 - Sunday, December 6: After a leisurely breakfast, short transfer to nearby Catania Airport in time for the departure, around noon, of our return Lufthansa flight to Toronto, via Frankfurt.

**Tour cost from Toronto, based on double occupancy: $3,950**

“Land only” (i.e. from Catania Airport upon arrival of the group flight on November 25 to Catania Airport on December 6): $3,010

Supplement for “double room for single use”: $550

Included in the tour price:
- Return flight on Lufthansa and/or partner airlines, including all airport taxes, security fees and fuel surcharges;
- Accommodation for 9 nights in a deluxe hotel in Palermo and 2 nights in a first-class hotel in Catania, based on double occupancy - the single occupancy supplement is $550;
- Breakfast daily, four dinners, some with wine/water, and one full winery lunch, also including wine;
- Airport transfers, sightseeing, and visits as outlined in the itinerary;
- Services of our tour escort and gratuities for drivers and local guides.
Not Included:
Beverages with meals; meals other than those shown above; items of a personal nature; and travel insurance, rates are available upon request.

**RECOMMENDED BOOKS ABOUT SICILY:**

* Lawrence Durrell, *Sicilian Carousel*
* Giuseppe Tomasi de Lampedusa, *The Leopard*
* Sandra Benjamin, *Sicily: Three Thousand Years of Human History*
* John Keahey, *Seeking Sicily: A Cultural Journey Through Myth and Reality in the Heart of the Mediterranean*
* John Julius Norwich, *Sicily: An Island at the Crossroads of History*
* Peter Robb, *Midnight in Sicily: On Art, Food, History, Travel and la Cosa Nostra*
* Mark Zuehlke, *Operation Husky: The Canadian Invasion of Sicily, July 10-August 7, 1943*
TERMS & CONDITIONS

RESERVATIONS AND DEPOSITS:
Reservations should be made as early as possible to ensure the departure of your choice. A deposit of $750.00 required at the time of registration. Your reservation is confirmed upon receipt of your deposit and registration form. No reservations will be accepted without a signed registration form.

REFUND OF UNUSED ARRANGEMENTS:
Because the rates of Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. are based on group participation, no refund can be made for any tour accommodation or tour service or tour feature not taken. If cancellation occurs while the tour is in progress, no refund can be made for the tour portion not taken. We strongly suggest that to allow for any unexpected contingencies, you purchase the all-inclusive insurance.

CANCELLATION POLICY:
Refund of deposit is made if cancellation is received in writing by Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. more than 90 days prior of the departure date of the tour less a $500.00 non-refundable administrative fee per person. For cancellation received in writing 90 days prior or less the following cancellation charges apply:
90 days to 61 days before departure: 25% of tour cost
60 to 31 days before departure: 50% of tour cost
Within 30 days prior to departure: 100% of tour cost

RESPONSIBILITY:
The acceptance of the initial service to be provided under the tour shall be considered an acceptance by the tour member of those conditions. We also reserve the right to decline, to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. We reserve the right without notice, to withdraw any part or all of the tour. Factors such as airline schedule changes, hotel overbookings, inclement weather, travel warnings by the Canadian Government etc. may necessitate changes in the itinerary. There may also be other circumstances in which changes become necessary or advisable.
By commencing the tour, I agree to the release and agreement as included below.

RELEASE & AGREEMENT:
By placing my deposit and commencing the tour I understand and agree to the following:

1. That all tours are delivered in conjunction with other service providers, including but not limited to travel agent and booking services, airlines, hotel and accommodation providers, transportation providers including but not limited to coach, train and ferry services, restaurant providers, and local guides. We shall not be held responsible for the failure by any person or company to render any transportation, lodging or other travel service to be provided on the tour. All hotels, transportation and other travel services are provided subject to all the terms and conditions under which they are offered to the public generally.

2. I know that tour programs include walking and may including hiking and fitness programs that have potential hazardous activities associated with them. I should not participate prior to approval by my physician. I assume any and all other risks associated with these events included but not limited to falls, contact with other participants, the effects of the weather including high heat and/or humidity.

3. To release, indemnify and hold harmless Pauwels Travel Bureau and their affiliates (which term shall include parents, subsidiaries, officers, directors, shareholders, agents and employees of Pauwels Travel Bureau as well as Pauwels Travel themselves) (the “Released Parties”) from, and agree not to sue the Released Parties for, any claims that I may have arising from, or in connection with, any personal injury,
bodily injury, mental anguish, emotional distress, physical, property or other damage that I may suffer
from any cause whatsoever related in any way to my participation in this tour. Without limiting the
generality of the foregoing, I release, indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties from, and agree
not to sue them for any personal injury, bodily injury, mental anguish, emotional distress, physical,
property or other damage that I may suffer from the Released Parties’ negligence other than from
intentional or reckless acts by such parties. I further agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless the
Released Parties from any and all acts of God, war (whether declared or undeclared), terrorist activities,
incidents of politically motivated violence, illness or quarantine, strikes or government restrictions or the
acts or omissions of any other agents over which the Released Parties have no direct or indirect control,
including, without limitation, airlines, railways, bus companies, hotels, shipping companies, guides and
sub-contracted agents or tour operators. This release also includes activities not offered that may be
considered risky. I further release any Tour Directors, bus drivers or other individuals involved in my
tour.

4. That the air carrier’s liability for loss of or damage to baggage or property, or for death or injury to
person, is limited by their tariffs, or the Warsaw Convention, or both.

5. That Pauwels Travel Bureau shall have no liability or responsibility for me when I am absent from
activities, such as visits to friends or relatives or during stay-ahead/stay-behind option periods if the
stay-ahead/stay-behind period does not include the services of a Tour Director.

6. To abide by directions of my Tour Director or other leadership personnel during my tour. Failure to do
so may result in my termination from tour immediately. I understand that to disobey such rules or
directions are to waive the right to any refund, and that I may be sent home at my own expense. The
participant and family undertake full financial responsibility for any damage caused by the participant
and agree to pay his/her return home on the first available flight, should his/her behavior be deemed
detrimental to the welfare of the group.

7. To abide by all local laws when in Canada and abroad, including those concerning drugs and alcohol.
(Minors must have parents’ permission to use alcohol even if the local law would otherwise permit them
to.) I understand that if I abuse or disobey such laws, even unintentionally, I waive my right to a refund,
and Pauwels Travel may send me home at my own expense. I also understand that should local
authorities be involved, I will be subject to the laws of the country I am visiting.

8. That if I become ill or incapacitated, Pauwels Travel and its employees, or a designated chaperone may
take any action they deem necessary for my safety and well-being, including securing medical treatment
(at my own expense) and transporting me home. Pauwels Travel retains the right, in its sole discretion,
to contact the traveller’s parent(s) and/or guardian or emergency contact with regard to health issues or
any matters whatsoever that relates to the traveller’s tour. These rights transcend any and all privacy
regulations that may apply. In the event of a medical emergency, Pauwels Travel will attempt to cause
appropriate treatment to be administered, and the traveller authorizes Pauwels Travel to do so. Pauwels
Travel, however, makes no warranty that it will be able to cause effective (or any) emergency treatment
to be administered.

9. That Pauwels Travel may use any film likenesses taken of me and any of my comments while on a tour
for future publication and also use my contact information for future Pauwels Travel communications.
A WORD ABOUT GROUP AIRFARES:

Please note that when booking one of our air inclusive tours, Pauwels Travel has negotiated reduced rates with the airline that we are able to confirm and lock in up to 359 days before travel. While it is wonderful to share the savings and flexibility this provides with you, our valued guests, the privilege does come with some restrictions. In some cases it may not be possible to collect frequent flyer miles, you may not be able to check in online 24 hours before travel, or you may need to try checking in with your ticket number rather than your booking reference and, in almost ALL cases we are not able to offer advanced seat selection.

It is the airline that makes the reservation and has control over the booking so it is their policy, not ours, that prevents us from assigning specific seats. If a request is made, it is passed on to the airline by our staff when they submit the names to the airline, i.e., 30-60 days prior to departure. Calling us several days before you leave will not change this fact nor will getting upset with our staff.

If a certain type of seat is indispensable to you, we suggest that you book our tour on a “land only” basis and make individual flight arrangements, in which case you may be able to get the seat of your choice; Pauwels Travel would be happy to assist you with that reservation at absolutely no additional charge. We will offer you the best fare available, but please note that this can only be done once a tour is a guaranteed departure because your individual airfare’s conditions are likely to involve cancellation penalties. We thank you in advance for your kind understanding of the above!
REGISTRATION FORM

Please book _________ seat(s) on the “Palermo and Best of Sicily” tour of November 24 - December 6, 2020.
Enclosed is my/our deposit of ________________ ($750 per person, plus insurance premium if taken.)
I wish to book on group flights _______________ OR land only _______________.

Deposit and insurance premium, if taken, are due with registration and you will be invoiced for the balance due 45 days prior to departure.

WE REQUIRE A COPY OF YOUR PASSPORT (INFORMATION PAGES ONLY) VALID 3 MONTHS AFTER TOUR TO BE SENT IN WITH YOUR REGISTRATION FORM.

PASSPORT NAME(S): Please indicate the appropriate title (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Dr., Ms.)
Surname______________________First__________________Middle(s)__________________________
Surname______________________First__________________Middle(s)__________________________

If applicable, give your commonly used first name as you would like it to appear on your name tag: (e.g. “Liz” for “Mary Elizabeth”) ______________________________

Address________________________________________________City:___________________________
Postal Code: __________ Phone: ________________ (Email)______________________________

If traveling alone, is a SINGLE ROOM REQUIRED? YES_____ NO______
If sharing, what is your bed preference: twin (2 beds)_______________ double (1 bed)_______________?

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: We find the earlier a request is made, the more success we have in filling it, so please list any dietary requests, allergies, any special physical needs or frequent flyer numbers etc here. We cannot ensure requests made 30 days or less prior to departure will be possible.

________________________________________________________________

Insurance, Please call the office for premiums then record it on application and add premium to deposit.
I/we would like to purchase (please check and record your rate):

Name: ___________________________ Date of Birth: ___________________________
Name: ___________________________ Date of Birth: ___________________________

All-inclusive Package ______________________ Non-medical Package ____________________________
Other __________________ OR Decline Insurance ____________________________

PAYMENT: □ Cheque payable to Pauwels Travel □ Visa □ Mastercard □ American Express
Amount Paid: __________________ Card Number: ___________________________
Expiry: __________ Security Code: __________ Signature: ____________________________

“I/we agree to the terms and conditions attached to the program, have indicated our insurance choice, indicated any special requests and included payment”.
Date______________________ (Signature)(s)__________________________________________

Please forward this completed and signed form, copy of passport and payment to:

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